Social representations of happiness and nature among Finnish adolescents

"From time to time, I go to the forest and listen to my head"

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This thesis explores social representations of nature and happiness in nature among Finnish youth. Even though the concepts of happiness and nature are common in daily exchanges, they remain difficult to define, and little is known of their usage among laypeople. Similarly, nature's effects on well-being are well documented, but how happiness occurs in nature has not been examined through social representations. Finland is an interesting country to study these phenomena, as Finland is often portrayed through its unique nature, and has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for three consecutive years. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Finnish youth discuss happiness in nature, and whether there are distinctive shared social representations.

The study used Moscovici's Social Representations Theory as a theoretical framework. The theory's purpose is to explore laypeople's conceptions of everyday phenomena, making it suitable for this research. The research was part of a bigger LUODE-project, funded by the European Social Fund. LUODE aims to develop multidisciplinary collaboration and service innovations for youth. University of Helsinki's role was to better understand the everyday lives of the youth and this research contributes to the latter aim. The participants consisted of 15-16-year-old Lahti 9th graders (n=355). They first saw a marketing video of Finland aimed at foreign visitors, in which the main theme was the experience of happiness in nature. They were then asked to write their responses to a paper questionnaire, with questions like "What does the video say about happiness in your opinion? Discuss, whether nature makes you happy? Why yes? Why not?". Responses varied in length from one word to lists, and from sarcastic comments to personal, even poetic, descriptions of happiness in nature. This research will focus on their personal accounts, and when combined, these created shared social representations. The research questions were: What are the shared ideas the youth have about nature, and of happiness in nature? How are these social representations objectified or anchored? Do the youth have shared social representations about nature, and more specifically about happiness in nature?

As a result of the research questions, the analysis identified two main themes. First, nature was defined through shared lay perceptions, and nature in the societal context of Finland. It was clear that there was not just one simplistic definition of nature among the youth. Instead, their descriptions varied from common objectifications of nature, like cleanliness, forests, and summer cabins, to societal issues including the national welfare system, and global issues like climate change. Second, happiness in nature was experienced in a holistic manner: nature was a place for peace of mind, for activities, and for sensory engagement. These representations of happiness revealed holistic, and multisensory experiences of happiness when spending time in nature. The results show that Finnish youth go to nature to relax, be active, and be mindful and that their experiences in nature involve multisensory approaches, which all contributed to their experiences of happiness. Multisensory experiences as social representations may offer new insights for future research.

These representations explicate how detailed and varying the everyday terms of happiness and nature are. Nature served as an important milieu for daily moments of happiness among the youth. Finnish youth also criticized the claims in the video and discussed the influence of the Finnish welfare system as well as climate change in their responses. The current study proposes that these holistic and multisensory methods to experience happiness in nature should be taken into account when planning well-being interventions, city planning, and nature preservation.

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Social representations, happiness, nature, Finnish, youth, multisensory, holistic

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract
Tässä maisteritutkielmassa keskitytään tutkimaan nuorten suomalaisten sosiaalisia representaatioita luonnosta, sekä onnellisuudesta luonnossa. Onnellisuus ja luonto ovat päivittäisissä keskusteluissa käytettyjä termejä, mutta niiden maallikkokäsityksiä on tutkittu vain vähän. Tutkimukset osoittavat, että luonnolla on positiivisia vaikutuksia hyvinvointiin, mutta tätä yhteyttä ei ole tutkittu sosiaalisten representaatioiden kautta. Näiden käsitteiden tutkiminen Suomessa on kahdesta syystä ajankohtainen ja kiinnostava: luonto on vahvasti läsnä suomalaisten arjessa nykypäivänä sekä historiallisesti ja YK:n tutkimuksen mukaan Suomi on maailman onnellisin maa jo kolmatta vuotta peräkkäin. Tarkoituksena onkin perehtyä tarkemmin luonnon ja onnellisuuden yhteyksiin sekä näiden termien käsityksiin suomalaisten nuorten keskuudessa.

Moscovicin sosiaalisten representaatioiden teoria toimii tutkimuksen viitekehyksenä. Sosiaaliset representaatiot auttavat tutkimaan maallikkojen jaettuja käsityksiä jokapäiväisistä asioista ja ilmiöistä. Tutkielma on osa laajempaa LUODE-hanketta (luonto ja taide nuorten työelämätaitojen oppimisympäristö), jonka yksi päämäärä on tuottaa tutkimustietoa nuorten arjesta. Kaiken kaikkiaan 355 yhdeksäsluokkalaista nuorta (15-16-vuotiaat) Lahden yläkouluista osallistui tutkimukseen. Heille näytettiin ulkomaalaisille yleisöille suunnattu Suomea markkinoiva mainosvideo, jonka päämääränä oli lisätä matkailua Suomeen ja jossa onnellisuuden kokemukset luonnossa olivat keskiössä. Videon nähtyään he vastasivat paperilomakkeen kysymyksiin, jossa kysyttiin heidän käsityksiään onnellisuudesta ja luonnosta: ”Mitä video kertoo mielestäsi onnellisuudesta? Pohdi, tekeekö luonto sinut onnelliseksi? Miksi kyllä, miksi ei?”. Vastaukset vaihtelivat yhdestä sanasta listoihin, ja sarkastisista kommenteista henkilökohtaisiin, jopa poeettisiin, kuvauksiin onnellisuudesta luonnosta. Tutkielman kannalta kiinnostavaa onkin, onko nuorilla jaettuja sosiaalisia representaatioita onnellisuudesta ja luonnosta. Tutkimuskysymykset olivat: Mitä ovat nuorten jaetut käsitykset luonnosta, sekä onnellisuudesta luonnossa? Miten sosiaaliset representaatiot objektivoitiin tai ankkuroitiin? Onko nuorilla jaettuja sosiaalisia representaatioita luonnosta, sekä onnellisuudesta luonnosta?

Tulosten mukaan nuorten sosiaaliset representaatiot luonnosta ja onnellisuudesta olivat holistisia sekä moniaistisia. Luonnon representaatiot jaettiin kahteen teemaan: maallikkokäsityksiin luonnosta sekä luonnosta osana ympäröivää yhteiskuntaa. Luonto ei ollut käsitteenä yksinkertaistettu, vaan sisälsi monia ulottuvuuksia, joita nuoret kuvailivat objektivointien avulla. Nämä sisälsivät tyypillisiä suomalaisia luontoteemoja, kuten puhdas luonto, mökki, kesä, vesistöt. Sen lisäksi nuoret ottivat ympäröivän nyky-yhteiskunnan puitteet sekä teemat esiin vastauksissaan luonnosta: Suomen hyvinvointiyhteiskunta sekä ilmastonmuutos kehystivät heidän vastauksiaan onnellisuudesta ja luonnosta. Onnellisuus luonnossa koettiin holistisesti: luonto oli paikka, jossa mieli rauhoittui, keho aktivoitui ja moniaistinen ympäristön havainnointi korostui. Tulokset osoittivat, että suomalaisnuoret menevät luontoon rentoutumaan, olemaan aktiivisia sekä olemaan läsnä ja tietoisia ympäristöstään ja itsestään. Moniaistiset sosiaaliset representaatiot tarjoavat uusia näkökulmia teorian hyödyntämiseen tulevaisuuden tutkimuksissa.

Nämä sosiaaliset representaatiot paljastavat kuinka moniulotteisia luonnon ja onnellisuuden käsitteet sekä yhteydet ovat. Luonto tarjoaa paikan kokonaisvaltaiselle hyvinvoinnille ja havainnoinnille nuorten keskuudessa. Nuoret myös kritisoivat videon väitteitä, sekä keskustelivat suomalaisen yhteiskunnan ja ilmastonmuutoksen vaikutuksista onnellisuuden kokemuksiin luonnossa. Tämän tutkimuksen tuloksia, jossa holistiset ja moniaistiset luontokokemukset korostuvat, voidaan hyödyntää suunniteltaessa hyvinvoinnin interventioita, tulevaisuuden kaupunkeja sekä kaikkia osallistavaa luonnonsuojelua yhteiskunnassa.

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Sosiaaliset representaatiot, onnellisuus, luonto, suomalaiset, nuoret, moniaistisuus, kokonaisvaltaisuus

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1 INTRODUCTION

"He thought about how much he loved everything; the forest and the sea, the rain and the wind, the sunshine, the grass and the moss, and how impossible it would be to live without them all, and this made him feel very, very sad."

-Tove Jansson, Comet in Moominland

The benefits of nature on one's well-being and happiness have been an enduring interest for artists, like Tove Jansson, and a more recent avenue for researchers. Even though 'happiness' and 'nature' are concepts used in everyday discussions, there seems to be a lack of understanding the social representations of these terms among laypeople. Examining this topic further in Finland was feasible for two reasons. First, Finland is known for its endless opportunities to wander outdoors: the extensive forests, the coastline with thousands of islands, and the fells in Lapland are familiar representations of nature to Finns and exotic to foreigners. Second, according to the World Happiness Report published by the UN, Finland has been the happiest country in the world for three consecutive years (Sachs et al., 2018; Helliwell et al., 2019, 2020). Thus, this research aims to better understand the timely theme of happiness in nature: are there common shared social representations of nature and happiness among Finnish youth? Understanding the lay perceptions may eventually help to promote the health of individuals as well as protect our planet by conserving these unique natural environments.

People are spending increasing amounts of time indoors, even though the benefits of spending time outdoors are well documented (Cole & Hall, 2010; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011). Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) argues that green cities create healthier citizens who need fewer health services (WHO, 2016), whereas the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals aim to secure greenspace provision for making "cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (UN General Assembly, 2015, p.21). Nationally, nature is considered to be a part of Finnish national identity, but in Finland and in other European countries, the availability and quality of forests have been reduced (Tyrväinen, Silvennoinen & Hallikainen, 2017). Previous research has found that Finnish

youth use nature for focusing on their thoughts (Simula, 2012), and nature was found to be restorative mentally and physically (Wiens, Kyngäs & Pölkki, 2016). Also, previous research has stated that youth living in urban environments will have fewer connections to nature (Tyrväinen, Silvennoinen, Korpela & Ylén, 2007). The current study aims to expand on these findings.

In 2019, when first formulating the topic for this research, I came across a divisive, yet intriguing marketing video on various social media platforms. Visit Finland started a campaign - "Rent a Finn – Find your calm" – in which they sought for ordinary Finns to be happiness guides for foreign visitors who want to understand the secret but a simple ingredient of Finnish happiness: Finns' appreciation for nature (See Appendix). This piqued my interest because of the co-occurrence of happiness and nature in a video that represents Finland and Finns to the foreigners. Eventually, the video became central in the first meetings with my supervisor, causing lively and interesting discussions around the topics of happiness and nature. Due to the video's appropriate thematic content, it was used as a stimulus when collecting responses from Finnish youth on their thoughts about happiness and nature-connectedness.

Happiness research has increased within the past decades, which has meant a shift in focus toward positive aspects of mental health. For example, UN nominations for the happiest countries started in 2011. Finland being nominated the happiest country for three years in a row caused an interesting reception among Finns. Seppänen (2019) writes that instead of being the happiest, perhaps Finns are actually the most content – to be a Finn is to be content with little, he writes. The open comments section for this piece included agreements, criticism towards the research ("humbug such studies"), and counterclaims about how Finland is struggling with unemployment rates, mental health issues, and taking care of the elderly. Thus, understanding lay conceptions of happiness among "the happiest citizens" became even more central and an intriguing research topic.

In spring 2020, the coronavirus pandemic changed the definition of 'normal'. A look into the national news articles showed that Finns seemed to appreciate the surrounding nature in higher numbers and were encouraged to experience nature's positive effect on their mood, for example by simply looking out the window or stepping out into their backyard (Kröger, 2020). Yle News (Myllyaho, 2020) also wrote that the sales of bikes, hiking gear, and other outdoor equipment increased drastically during May 2020. The interest towards outdoors increased exponentially, with parking places in national parks around the capital area becoming scarce (Kosonen, 2020). The pandemic also created an "exceptional phenomenon", as migration from cities to the countryside increased (Kluukeri, 2020). These current discussions revolving around nature and well-being make the current research a topical investigation.

Even though the concept of happiness is widely used and has reached public attention through both scientific research, and common language, the term remains difficult to define. Previous studies have focused on the outcomes, dimensions, or antecedent of happiness, instead of focusing on the meaning in everyday use of the concept of happiness (Carlquist et al., 2017). Social representation theory is used as the theoretical frame for this research, as it allows the examination of shared ideas and thoughts among laypeople. Social representation theory (Moscovici, 1981) is a theory of common knowledge or common sense (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). Individuals create these representations in daily exchanges to better interact with others, and they may differ among individuals and pass on from generations.

It is also of interest to focus on the representations among the youth living in Finland. Many are similar in age to Greta Thunberg, a climate activist who launched the Fridays for Future movement in 2018. Youth protests have been held globally, and one of the strikes was the largest climate strike in history. Eventually, the youth in this research will become voters, taxpayers, and leaders of this country. Previous research has found that individuals who feel more connected with nature, are more cautious about human impact on the environment (Nisbet, Zelenski & Murphy, 2011) and are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior (Tam, 2013). Understanding what nature and happiness mean for them, could help

to prevent future issues by providing proactive measures; increasing happiness via nature-connectedness could benefit both individuals and natural environments.

This research is part of a bigger three-year project LUODE: "Nature and the arts as a learning environment for skills young people need in working life" (LUODE, 2018). The project offers different experience and action environments, where the youth can enhance their future work-life skills. University of Helsinki's role is to provide research results of the youth's everyday lives, to which this study contributes. The main funder is the Northern Ostrobothnia's Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. The remaining funds are covered by the municipality fund, independent funders, and other public funding. The project is part of the "Creative and Inclusive Finland", which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The project administrator is the University of Helsinki's Lahti campus.

Next, the relevant literature on happiness and nature will be further discussed, followed by an introduction to the Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1981), and finally the research questions will be presented. The 5th chapter will explain the methods, data, and analysis. The results are discussed in the sixth chapter, and the final chapter consists of discussion, future research, conclusion and ethical issues.

2 HAPPINESS RESEARCH

Interest in happiness is a global phenomenon (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005), and happiness has even been considered the ultimate goal in life (Layard, 2011). Happiness is related to better health and relationships, more money, and creativity (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). However, it has been claimed important to understand determinants of happiness that are unrelated to consumption and money, because while economies have kept improving, levels of happiness among citizens have not (Diener & Seligman, 2004).

Within the past decades, there has been a steady increase in research focusing on happiness. Many disciplines have studied happiness, and definitions exist in psychology, but also in

theology, politics and economics (Diener, 1984). According to some researchers, 'happiness' is the most popular term in research and lay usage (Lu & Shih, 1997), and will also be used in this research. Interest in mental well-being in psychology increased due to the introduction of positive psychology in the 1990s (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology surfaced as a counter-reaction to the negatively skewed field of psychology, which was mainly focused on diagnoses and symptoms of mental illnesses. However, since positive psychology is still relatively new, there is a constant need for more research to gain more understanding of approaches, ideas, and assessment instruments (Richardson & Guignon, 2008).

The WHO defines mental health as "a state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to her or his community" (WHO, 2004). Happiness can even define a country's prosperity due to its impact on productivity and societal functioning (Cassiers, 2009). Generally, Nordic countries situate to the very top of world happiness comparisons, as they score highly in income, health and life expectancy, social support, freedom, trust, and generosity (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, 2019).

Pessi (2008) discusses how the research on happiness and a good life are intriguing due to two reasons. First, the research on happiness is philosophical, but also very much oriented towards people's everyday lives. Research heavily surrounds the topics of happiness, and self-help books are plentiful for the laypeople's understanding and the quest for happiness. Secondly, research on happiness is both "timeless and timely" (Pessi, 2008, p.60). As the next chapter on the definitions of happiness reveals, the portrayals of happiness have varied throughout the centuries, and in today's world, there is a more individually focused perception of happiness taking hold. Happiness could be approached from philosophical and religious perspectives, fulfilling personal needs and wishes, or through personal conceptions of happiness (Diener & Suh, 1997), but also as a construct of culture and a goal created by culture (Pawelski, 2012). Thus, happiness is a very rich concept to examine through social

representations instead of focusing solely on subjective experiences – rather these individual accounts are taken into account through socially shared experiences.

2.1 Definitions of happiness

"Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and the end of human existence." -Aristotle

The definitions of happiness have changed over the past centuries. McMahon (2006) claims that happiness in the poems of Ancient Greeks' was portrayed purely as a chance of luck. Indeed, for a long time, happiness was seen as something that is not in the hands of people but instead was to be left with the Gods. During the late 14th century 'happy' was equivalent to 'luck', and a little later changed to 'blessed'. Happiness was seen as something one could only reach in Heaven while suffering preceded in the living life before death. Towards the end of the 18th century, during the Enlightenment period, happiness was viewed as a human right and pursuing happiness as we know it has roots in this era. People started to enjoy and find happiness on earth, and people were left to attain happiness on their own independent from Gods or religion. During the latter half of the 19th century, pain and suffering were eventually seen as paths leading to happiness, instead of being considered as disablers of happiness. Happiness was considered an individualistic right and responsibility.

These ideologies are reflected in a multitude of languages when examining the etymology of happiness (McMahon, 2006). The Middle English "Hap", meaning luck, coincidence, or chance, is the root for English words happiness and happen. Similarly, 'heur' (from bonheur) translates as fortune or happiness in French, whereas in German, "glück" means happiness and luck (McMahon, 2006). In Icelandic "heppinn" translates to happy or lucky, and similarly "happin" in Scottish translates to fortunate or blessed. In Finnish, this is portrayed through the similarities between words "onnellisuus" and "onnekkuus" (Martela, 2014). However, only in English the word 'happiness' has shifted to refer to subjective good feelings than fortunate circumstances (Duncan, 2014).

Happiness derives from positive and negative reactions to life events, and it is defined as an individual's affective or feeling state (Sirgy & Lee, 2006). Affective happiness is considered to be momentary, consisting of positive feelings and less so of negative feelings. In contrast, evaluative happiness is a more permanent positive judgment that one lives their life by. Campbell (1976) even argues that happiness fluctuates daily, having a short-term effect, whereas evaluative happiness is less influenced by environmental factors.

In the current research, the most common distinction to define well-being is through two overlapping views: hedonism and eudaimonia (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Schmitt, Brakus and Zarantonello (2015) discuss the two conceptual aspects for happiness: on one hand, hedonism, the fleeting subjective well-being or pleasure, and on the other, eudaimonia, the enduring processes of flourishing and reaching wanted goals. Well-being via hedonism aims for minimizing pain and maximizing pleasure, whereas eudaimonic well-being is a higher level of human flourishing (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Despite the contrasting views of eudaimonia and hedonism, they tend to be positively correlated and are considered overlapping yet distinct, and individuals scoring highly in both have the highest overall well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010).

Hedonism derives from the Greek philosopher Aristippus. In simple terms, hedonism contends that one should minimize pain and maximize pleasure. Comfort, relaxation, and ease are bodily feelings of pleasure, and fun, enjoyment, and positive emotions are subjective states of pleasure, which one should aim to maximize (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Those who support hedonism, such as Hobbes and DeSade after Aristippus, argue that it is an approach to take care of oneself and escape life's ongoing concerns (Huta, 2016). It can be measured through life satisfaction, increased positive affect, and decreased negative affect (Lucas & Diener, 2009). Subjective well-being is also used as a synonym for hedonic wellbeing, and it can be measured through Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988), the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985).

In contrast, eudaimonic well-being derives from the works of Aristotle, where happiness is more within one's spirit when one is living according to one's true self (Waterman, 1993). Eudaimonia may be translated as 'good divine power', 'good fortune', or 'good spirit' (Pessi, 2008, p.61). Aristotle viewed eudaimonia as one being more in touch with human flourishing, whereas hedonism is seeking for momentary desires and pleasure. Eudaimonic happiness can derive from doing good for others and reaching one's true potential. People may find happiness through money, power, and friends – external sources of happiness – whereas true happiness is related to "contemplation and virtues (such as honesty, justice and, truthfulness)" (Pessi, 2008, p.61). Eudaimonia is oriented towards growth and adding meaning to one's life (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Instead of hedonic momentary pleasures, eudaimonic well-being might be delayed and unpleasant at times, but more rewarding in the long run (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

2.2 Approaches to happiness

Happiness, subjective well-being (SWB), life satisfaction, and quality of life (QoL) are often used as synonyms (Veenhoven, 2007), and multiple questionnaires have been developed to better understand and define the concept or state of happiness. Questionnaires where people answer either one, or a multitude of questions about how they are feeling, help to understand how happy people are, and what are the underlying determinants of happiness.

People's quality of life is usually measured by the subjective indicator of happiness, alongside subjective well-being (SWB), life satisfaction, and subjective quality of life (QOL), and sometimes these terms are used without common consensus (Bramston, Pretty & Chipuer, 2002). SWB was studied by psychologists already in the 1940s (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999), and it consists of life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and absence of negative mood (Diener & Lucas, 1999). The most commonly used measure for both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being is the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant et al., 2007), which consists of fourteen questions that are positively framed and asking about the person's feelings over the past two weeks, for example, "I've been feeling optimistic about the future".

The interest in happiness can be simply explicated through the variety of surveys that gain data on people's happiness. The European Social Survey (ESS) examines evaluative happiness, and it is used in a variety of other large-scale surveys (the Eurobarometer, the World Values Survey, and the Gallup World Poll). The questions are: "How happy are you?" (on a scale from 0=extremely unhappy, to 10=extremely happy) and "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?" (0=extremely dissatisfied, 10=extremely satisfied). The ESS covers 36 European countries, whereas the Eurobarometer Survey covers the member countries of the European Union, the World Values Survey 80 countries worldwide and the Gallup World Poll cover 156 countries. However, Duncan (2014) argues that survey-based research has overtaken happiness research in the past decades, and the analyses are perhaps falsely based on the assumption that happiness is a universal goal and can be objectively measured.

The United Nations have reported an annual World Happiness Report since 2011, and Finland has been ranked the happiest for the past three years (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, 2020). The report is published by the UN, but the data has been collected by Gallup World Poll. Happiness is measured through one subjective question item averaged over three years of 2016-2018; if a country has not taken part during those years the data from 2015 was used. All in all, 2000-3000 responses are given by each country. With the "Life Evaluation" item, a random sample of individuals from each country ranks their life on a ladder from 0 to 10, where 0 represents the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life. The survey also takes into consideration different perspectives on happiness through people's experiences of positive and negative emotions during the previous day (smiling, laughter, enjoyment, worry, sadness, anger). If happiness would only consist of these positive experiences and emotions, the questionnaire would rank the Latin American countries to the top of the instead of Nordic countries.

There has been criticism regarding the happiness research relying on scales and quantitative efforts to define what happiness consists of (Delle Fave et al., 2011). The authors argue that

if people are not allowed to define happiness for themselves, Western bias may occur as people start to use the definitions of psychologists and philosophers as their own (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). On the other hand, Cieslik (2014) argues that sociologists have focused too much on individual notions of wellbeing, for example explaining happiness as a good feeling. Furthermore, he also argues that understanding of the phenomenon has heavily relied on quantitative measures and methods, which simplify the understanding of happiness, and tend to lose insight. Using qualitative research methods allows people to define the word in their terms, whereas quantitative research may have limited definitions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Duncan (2014) has also argued that happiness as a term is more complex than the results of international surveys deem it to be. The article aims to "problematize the theory underlying political claims to happiness as a social goal" (2014, p.80) and wants to reconstruct how happiness is used in different contexts. He discusses how happiness is used in political agendas and seen as a link to improved GDP so much so that the happiness survey results are used to track and improve the country's progress in the UK (Duncan, 2014). In his paper, happiness is presented through the performativity of happiness: happiness is either attainable, lost, obligatory, impossible, or inauthentic. The themes contradict each other, overlap, and present happiness through both individual and social frames, portraying precisely how complex happiness is in different settings and discussions.

Social representations of happiness and unhappiness among Finnish women were explored through a word association study (De Paola, Wagner, Pirttilä-Backman & Lehtonen, 2020). The authors wanted to explore what happiness means for the citizens in the 'happiest country in the world' by exploring the laypeople's definitions, as well as their thoughts on how their happiness may be improved. Two different age groups of women took part (16-18 and 29-34-year-olds) and provided three shared semantic concepts of happiness: tangible, affective, and serene. The three most frequent associations with happiness were family, friends, and love. In relation to the current thesis, the younger participants also mentioned sun, warmth, summer and nature, perhaps in quite low numbers. Unhappiness was portrayed by both age

groups through loss and everyday problems; loneliness, grief and anxiety were the most mentioned associations.

Previous research has shown that people's happiness is influenced by social relations in their lives. This includes love, learning, income, and hobbies especially for young people (Pessi, 2008). Chiasson, Dubé, and Blondin (1996) asked young participants (students aged 18-25) in Canada, USA, and El Salvador what makes them happy. Shared answers consisted of family relationships, pursuing and reaching valued goals, self-positive attitudes, friendships, other and intimate relationships, enjoying activities, and life's pleasures. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that the social aspect may simply be explained by the assumption that 'feeling connected' in general increases well-being. Moreover, some have argued that happiness research has largely focused on economic factors and far less on social and cultural factors (Looze et al., 2018). Interestingly, when controlled for family connection or cultural connections, happiness may still be predicted through nature connectedness (Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014). This thesis will focus on finding clarity in what are the youth's own definitions and experiences on happiness specifically in nature.

3 NATURE RESEARCH

Natural environments offer numerous benefits, yet people spend increasingly more time indoors (MacKerron & Mourato, 2013). Experimental studies have found a multitude of beneficial individual outcomes, with improved cognition (Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008), decreased stress (Cole & Hall, 2010), increased self-esteem (Barton & Pretty, 2010), and greater emotional well-being (Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011). Furthermore, Carter (2011) argues that the influence of positive emotions on well-being creates an increase in the awareness of understanding the impacts of actions at individual and collective level. The WHO (2016) has claimed that supporting green cities where people can easily access nature will eventually lead to healthier citizens, which would decrease the need and costs for health services.

It has been argued that the multitude of different definitions of nature in various fields (e.g. biology, geology, economy) is problematic, yet it highlights the meaningfulness of nature in people's lives (Lummaa, Rönkä & Vuorisalo, 2012). Even still, nature remains difficult to define (Barton and Pretty, 2010), but researchers have aimed to distinguish between multiple definitions of natural environments, which should be taken into account when conducting research (McMahan & Estes, 2015). One simple definition is between human-interfered natural environments (e.g. urban green space, arboretums) and wild natural environments (e.g. wilderness areas, nature preserves). However, nature and greenspace are often used interchangeably, the latter being more inclusive describing both countryside and green areas in urban environments (Bragg & Atkins, 2016). According to Williams (1983) nature is culturally defined and it is not self-evident what is seen in nature and how it is seen; the definition depends on what in nature is deemed as important. Often, nature is seen as an antonym to culture (Fiske, 1992).

Disconnection from natural environments might be causing more psychological health issues and harmful environmental behavior (Kellert, 1997). Approximately half of the world's population lives in cities, and by 2030 figures will increase to three in every five living in urban environments (Smith & Guarnizo, 2009). A recent press release by the Finnish Environment Institute states that currently 72 percent of all Finns now reside in urban areas of the country (Nurmio & Lindholm, 2020). In turn, the urban areas cover only five percent of Finland's whole land area – the rest is considered to be rural.

However, greenness surrounding residential areas and subjective proximity to green spaces can improve subjective general health (Dadvand et al., 2016). Besides, nature connectedness may enhance the feeling of belonging to the larger community of nature, which in turn can increase pro-environmental behavior (Mayer, Frantz, Bruehlman-Senecal & Dolliver, 2009). Nature sensitivity, an empathetic relation to nature, is one of the cornerstones for sustainable behavior (Hungerford & Volk, 1990). Greater connection with nature can increase pro-environmental attitudes, as individuals who spend more time outdoors are more likely to purchase "green products" (Mayer & Frantz, 2004).

Urbanization has changed the once vital human-nature relationship from living in the natural environments into occasional recreation and enjoyment visits to nature (Laurén, 2013). Children are spending less time playing outdoors (Louv, 2005), and in almost all nations people are spending almost all of their time indoors, even when an exposure to nature can increase one's happiness (MacKerron & Mourato, 2013). Outdoor activity levels have been decreasing in Japan and the USA (Pergams & Zaradic, 2006), but in Finland, outdoor activities are considered to be a part of nearly everyone's lives (Sievänen & Neuvonen, 2011).

3.1 Nature in Finland

Finland is a Nordic country, located in Northern Europe on the same latitudes as Alaska and Central Siberia. Finland is often called the 'Land of Thousand Lakes', having nearly 200,000 of them. In addition, the coastline hosts up to 95,000 sea islands. Finnish nature is also presented through dense forests, as trees cover 70% of the land making Finland Europe's most forested country (Hallanaro, 2011). Finland is also known for the arctic wilds of Lapland, Aurora Borealis, sauna culture, holiday homes, midnight sun, and Finland's traditional right to roam (Hallanaro, 2011). Everyone has easy access to nature (Laaksoharju & Rappe, 2010) and during 2018 over 3.2 million visits were made to the 40 national parks in Finland (Metsähallitus, 2018). Even in the densely populated capital city area, one can easily access parks, the shoreline, and forests. Finland is also a welfare state, having little corruption, and has one of the most equal income distributions (Pesonen & Riihinen, 2002).

Lahti, where the participants lived, is located approximately 100 kilometers northeast of Helsinki, the capital of Finland. In English, Lahti means bay, and the city is located at the end of lake Vesijärvi. Roughly 120,000 people are living in Lahti, making it the eight biggest city by population in Finland. Lahti is an average-sized city in Finland, where nature is close and can be easily accessed, providing a fitting context for this research. Lahti has been nominated as the European Green Capital city in 2021, as the first city in Finland, making this research timely considering the city's focus on nature and pro-environmental living.

Relationships with nature belong to Finland's cultural heritage. At first, it appeared through an understanding of spiritual forces and creatures in nature, and then, in the 19th century there was a philosophical and artistic expression of nature (e.g. Leino, Gallen-Kallela, Sibelius), whereas now the focus has shifted to natural sciences (Wilenius, 1991). Appreciation of nature's beauty and nationalism was made possible by Romanticism and Finland being an autonomous Grand Duchy (Simola, 2008). Documented through art, music, and literature, Finnish nature was seen as uniquely beautiful. This is also well-depicted in Tove Jansson's quote at the beginning of this thesis; her books and art are commonly used illustrations of Finnish nature.

Nature's purpose in Finns' lives has changed throughout the decades. Forests have had an especially important economic, political, and cultural meaning for Finns (Roiko-Jokela, 2005). Soon after gaining independence, Finland was considered a poor country, where the forest industry, mostly owned by peasants, was at the top of exportation (Niemelä & Salminen, 2006). Nature in Finland is no longer a necessity or a place of work, but instead, people now enjoy nature through mental and physical experiences (Simula, 2012). It is important to note that nature is not univocal, but its meaning is entangled to the user's purposes and nature is then categorized differently depending on the situation and context (Simula, 2012). Thus, the current research aims to examine the shared social representations of nature among the participants.

Nature has been and continues to be an important source of well-being and activities for Finns (Liikkanen & Pääkkönen, 2005). Sievänen and Neuvonen (2011) list activities like walking, gathering natural products, sightseeing, and doing activities outdoors. The Nordic 'Everyman's right', the traditional right of open access to private and public forests is directly linked with many activities: hiking, swimming, camping, cycling, cross-country skiing as well as picking berries and mushrooms (Neuvonen, Riala, Nummelin, Sievänen & Tuulentie, 2018). People who venture outdoors are hoping to refresh, relax, find peace and silence, and engage in different bodily and psychological experiences (Paronen, 2001). Thus, nature

provides a place for multiple activities, which are mainly done to experience nature (Simula, 2005). Simula (2012) claims that outdoor recreation in romantic representation is seen as an aesthetic space, something that opposes urban and modern everyday lives.

In addition, it has been argued that Finland's welfare state's strong sense of equality, and citizens' shared responsibility is expressed in the traditional everyman's right (Neuvonen et al., 2018). This statement places the possibility of enjoying outdoor recreation in nature into the frame of societal context. Time is very much an essential resource for outdoor recreation: Finnish citizens enjoy some of the lowest working times in Europe in addition to the long holidays and the right to retirement pension (Neuvonen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, in Finland like in other Nordic countries, the underlying everyman's right implicates a strong sense of common values and universalism (Peltola et al., 2014). Everyone, even those who are less privileged, should have access to nature free of charge. The Finnish residents, even those who live in cities and towns, value forested areas the most (Korpela, Ylén, Tyrväinen & Silvennoinen, 2010). Even though the evidence suggests that people's mental well-being is linked with access to natural environments like forests, across Europe the availability and quality of forests have been reduced (Tyrväinen, Silvennoinen & Hallikainen, 2017).

3.2 Benefits of nature

Three major theories aim to explain the connection between nature and well-being: biophilia, attention restoration, and stress reduction. The biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984; Kellert & Wilson, 1993) posits that due to evolution, people have an inborn tendency to connect with nature and other living things. The need for connection remains strong since urbanization is still fairly recent when compared to the evolutionary history revolving around natural environments, where people who read cues in nature well enough would survive by successfully finding shelter, food, and water. Orr (1993) argued that there may be a critical period in one's childhood to develop biophilic beliefs through positive experiences in nature. Those adults who can recall positive experiences in natural environments from childhood

show higher nature connectedness (Tam, 2013). Kellert (1997) added that even though biophilia was seen as innate, it was also strongly influenced by culture and experiences.

The Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989) explains that time spent in nature can restore concentration via effortless attention. Restoration in this theory refers to the process when one recovers from a reduced level of coping with everyday life tasks (Hartig et al., 2011). The Stress Reduction Theory (Ulrich et al., 1991) claims that being in an unthreatening natural environment can reduce stress by evoking positive emotions and reducing negative emotions. However, these benefits are often overlooked (Korpela et al., 2018), even though they are essential to health and well-being (Gross, 2013).

The use of nature for therapeutic purposes has ancient roots. According to Hippocrates, physical and mental well-being depended on "airs, waters, and places" (Burford, 1969), and the benefits of green spaces on one's well-being can be traced back to ancient Roman texts (Thompson, 2011). In Finland, mental hospitals were located in scenic places because the relaxing and beautiful nature surroundings were seen as meaningful assets for treatment (Rappe & Malin, 2010): the very first Lapinlahti mental hospital was placed to a peaceful bay in Helsinki, which offered plenty of walking paths and space for a large garden that was developed by patients and workers in the coming years.

Utilizing nature for well-being has gained more interest within the past decades. Green Care employs nature interventions for well-being, which may be psychological, educational, social, or physical and include animals or plants within natural settings (Haubenhofer, Elings, Hassink & Hine, 2010). The effects of being in nature or simply seeing greenery can reduce stress and improve one's mood (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). College-aged students were found to have increased mental health from only ten minutes of sitting or walking in a natural environment (Meredith et al., 2020). Martens, Gutscher & Bauer (2011) found that forest environment in an urban setting had a positive effect on mental well-being, and six minutes of viewing natural forests in a virtual reality experiment also supported the participants' well-being. A recent study in Finland by Bielinis, Simkin, Puttonen, and Tyrväinen (2020) found

that viewing forest landscape videos could be used as an effective remedy for students struggling with procrastination. In contrast, they found that videos portraying urban environments increased procrastination levels.

The interrelatedness between happiness and the environment became a research topic 20 years ago (Welsch, 2002), and was largely focused on air pollution and noise nuisance. A systematic review focusing on the relationship between greenspace and mental wellbeing of adults reviewed 52 articles overall (Houlden, Weich, Porto de Albuquerque, Jarvis & Rees, 2018). Interestingly, mental well-being/happiness was examined through various quantitative measures, as well as just through one question in four studies. Thus, it is relevant to explore this topic further through qualitative research measures.

In Finland, nature is easy to access since 70% of the land area is covered by forest areas. Korpela et al. (2014) found that Finns who spent more leisure time in nature-based recreational activities, in contrast to those who spent less time in nature, had better emotional well-being. Finnish research has also found that short-term visits to nature can contribute to one's mental health through restoration (Tyrväinen et al., 2014) and perceived restoration (Pasanen et al., 2018). Simkin, Ojala, and Tyrväinen (2020) compared the restorative effects of four spruce-dominated forests on 39 participants, who visited each forest once spending 45 minutes in each. The old-growth forest and mature commercial forests were significantly the most restorative, which should be considered when planning land use and forest management. Previous research has claimed that the repeated findings of nature's benefits on one's well-being, should be enough to justify the preservation of national parks (Mace, Bell & Loomis, 2004). Thus, there is a need for sustainable nature interventions for nature conservation as well as mental well-being purposes.

Often in Western societies, nature is a separate entity from humans and culture. In Japan, Shinrin-Yoku is used as a healing practice. The program includes people walking in a forest setting, and they are asked to mindfully immerse themselves in nature with all their senses. The term was coined in 1982; 'yoku' translates to bathing, which implies that health is

holistic. After the introduction to the clinical fields, shinrin-yoku has been reported to show physical health benefits, as well as mental health benefits, such as mental relaxation and stress reduction (Park et al., 2012). A systematic review of 20 studies on the effects of shinrin-yoku found that negative mental health symptoms can be decreased with just 15 minutes of practice (Kotera, Richardson & Sheffield, 2020). Mindfulness means non-judgemental awareness through a focus on the present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003). A meta-analysis on the association between mindfulness and nature-connectedness showed significant results in studies including both students and community participants (Schutte & Malouff, 2018).

Even though nature can have positive impacts on one's wellbeing, there are also opposing views of these theories. For example, it is plausible that those who feel more connected with nature, feel more negative emotions and distress due to the issue of global warming (Capaldi, Dopko & Zelenski, 2014). Besides, those who are concerned about nature's state and government policies may feel more frustration and discouragement instead of positive emotions (Pelletier, Legault & Tuson, 1996). However, Capaldi et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis on the relationship between nature connectedness and happiness concludes that a sustainable and happy future can coexist as they are consistently found to be symbiotic and compatible. Spending time in nature may then offer a cost-efficient solution to increasing mental health issues and climate change (WHO, 2001).

3.3 Nature and adolescence

Previous research on adolescents' experiences in Finnish nature exist but are limited. Adolescence defined by the WHO is a transitional phase between the ages of 10 and 19 when one develops from childhood to adulthood. In 2001, Finnish research found that 15% of students depicted nature environments to be their favorite places (Korpela, Hartig, Kaiser & Fuhrer, 2001). Due to a concern that the youth is alienating from nature, Puhakka (2014) collected thematic writings and questionnaires from Finnish 15-21-year-olds in the Lahti area, regarding their definitions of nature and outdoor recreation. In addition to the questionnaire, they completed a writing task, which consisted of five open-ended nature activity thematic questions and a "bonus" question of describing or drawing one's favorite

place. According to the findings, the youth were placed to opposite ends of the spectrum: either nature was vital, or there was no interest in it. In line with previous research, the youth mostly described nature as a place for experiences and recreation; none mentioned the use of nature as a means for living.

Similarly, with the findings of Sjöblom (2012), who investigated the Swedish Finns' relation to nature, the youth discussed nature in romantic terms expressing their emotional experiences and highlighting the recreational aspects and aesthetics of nature (Puhakka, 2014). The youth highlighted how nature serves as a place where one can escape to and focus on their own experiences and thoughts (Puhakka, 2014). A more recent study by Rantala and Puhakka (2020) also used this data from 2014 to explore Finns' engagement with nature during outdoor recreation: in nature one can calm down and take distance from the pressures of everyday lives.

In a study by Wiens, Kyngäs, and Pölkki (2016) girls aged 13-16 living in northern Finland were interviewed in the spring of 2014 on the influences of seasonal changes, nature, and animals on their wellbeing. Summers were portrayed through happiness and activeness, whereas winter months were depicted as restrictive, depressing, and lazy. In the summer months the girls could do more activities and just spend time outdoors, whereas, in winter more time was spent indoors due to the darkness and poor weather. Nature was viewed as 'restorative' through premises for tranquility and a possibility for sensory perceptions. The Finnish girls valued being alone in nature, where they could unwind and relax. The experiences of sensory perceptions included sounds, colors, temperatures, light, and animals; the safety of nature was also valued. Lastly, both mental and physical wellbeing were positively influenced by animals.

In a more recent study, Neuvonen et al. (2018) conducted workshops in Finland where professionals were asked to vision futures of outdoor recreation in Finland. One group imagined that the younger generation will have a weaker nature connection, whereas another group saw an opportunity in using nature as a tool for integration for the immigrants, who

will become a significant part of the population. It was hoped that the health and well-being benefits of nature will be better recognized and utilized for locals and tourists. Additionally, the authors concluded that the future was seen as more polarized in terms of time and money. It has been predicted that nature connectedness will decrease in the future, perhaps even more so among youth living in urban environments (Tyrväinen et al., 2007). Based on these findings, there is a gap in understanding the benefits and experiences of happiness in nature.

4 SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY

"A system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history."

-Moscovici, 1973, p. 13

Social representation theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1981) posits how social knowledge is created and shared in different social groups. It is a theory of common knowledge or common sense (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). As described by Moscovici (1973), social representations are understood on a social or collective level and they explain how the world works, which helps individuals to communicate more effectively. Social representations are viewed as autonomous, and once they have been created and accepted, they may change, as new representations form through negotiations. Social representations are shared organized cognitions within its relative homogeneous population (Flament, 1994). However, these representations may have contradictory explanations between individuals even within the same community, culture, and individual (Howarth, Foster & Dorrer, 2004).

Social representation theory emerged in France in 1961 within the field of social psychology: Serge Moscovici's (1961) "La Psychoanalyse: Son Image et Son Publique" remains a classic. Moscovici studied the social understanding of psychoanalysis in France, where the new concept of 'psychoanalysis' surfaced and was found disturbing by many. He examined

questionnaires and mass media outlets that had three ideologically different audiences: Catholic conservatives, communists, and urban liberals' social representations of psychoanalysis were contrasted and compared.

Moscovici found there to be three distinct ways these mediums coped with communicating 'psychoanalysis' to their particular audiences. The new social knowledge was passed on through their processes, contents, and consequences: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. Without exploring these processes further, it should be noted that these communication methods explicate how certain groups have their own cultural ideologies and positions influencing how the meaning of new phenomena is passed on (Moscovici & Marková, 1998).

According to Moscovici (1984) the epistemological starting point for the theory is a semiotic triangle: ego (me), alter (the other), and representation object (object). A definition of an object does not occur without the other (alter). A person or a group of people (ego) can only know something (object) when it is related to another social entity (alter). This means that social relations are necessary to give meanings and codes to unfamiliar things so that it is possible to communicate about them. Indeed, knowing something involves always more than one mind (Marková, 2003).

Social representation theory acts as a bridge between social and psychological (Moscovici, 1998). The psychological refers to the existing ideas in an individual's mind, whereas the social occurs through recreation and negotiation between individuals. It was the task of social psychology to understand the structure and the dynamics behind social representations, due to its ability to take into account both individual aspects as well as the social: "In my opinion, the main task of social psychology is to study such representations, their properties, their origins and their impact." (Moscovici, 1984, p.13). Sociology portrayed social representations as "explanatory devices", whereas social psychology considered them as a phenomenon instead. It has been argued that Moscovici's use of 'representations' derives from the work of Durkheim (Marková, 2012). However, Moscovici (1988) criticized Durkheim's sociological approach to representations, which were formed by authorities in

society and remained relatively unchanged. Moscovici emphasized the agency of individuals, which made representations more malleable. Durkheim's concept of collective representation was more static and labeled by the authorities, leaving the agency of the individual to a minimum.

Moscovici (1981) saw the importance of including common sense to the social-psychological inquiry of thinking among individuals and communities. Common sense thinking had been labeled as unreliable, even dangerous among other social psychologists (Marková, 2015). The point of social representation theory is not to present the universal truth, but instead to focus on the significance of knowledge that has been produced socially among communities. Scientific knowledge and common sense are intertwined in social representations: "We take the transformation of scientific knowledge to be a fundamental aspect of common sense" (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983, p.104). Indeed, people are not aiming to reproduce scientific knowledge, but instead, their primary concern is to produce socially, emotionally, and pragmatically satisfying representations of the world (Jovchelovitch, 2008).

Social representations are always attached to a social group, history, or culture (Burr, 1995) and are created in daily exchanges. Through communication, individuals can understand, create and recreate a dynamic reality (Moscovici, 1993), which in turn provides scripts/schemas of behavior, attitudes, and ideologies (Van Dijk, 2000). Moscovici (1961, 2008) argued that social representations form of three components: information, attitude, and a mental image of a thing. A shared 'common sense' forms through memory and traditional structures (Moscovici, 1984) in addition to contemporary discussions. Social representations are shared by social group members, but not necessarily consensually (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Moscovici discusses the nature of social representations being "a combination of structure which is present before we have even begun to think, and of a tradition which decrees what we should think" (1984, p.23). Thus, meanings and representations exist before we can form any of them ourselves – the previous generations, culture, and who we are surrounded by

influences our way to see the world. However, these representations may change over time (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).

"I saw the transformation of scientific knowledge into common knowledge as a possible and exciting area of study." (Moscovici, 2001, p.228)

As the quote explicates, Moscovici became intrigued by the idea of lay theory. He wanted to better understand the laypeople's understanding of scientific knowledge, how "science affects our culture, everybody's ideas in ordinary life, or how these ideas could become a part of people's beliefs and so on" (Moscovici, 2001, p.227). In contrast, the main interest at the time, also modernity's problem according to Moscovici, seemed to be on how science impacted historical changes and people's thinking. Instead Moscovici states that he had a counter-reaction to the idea that "'le people ne pense pas', people are not capable of thinking rationally, only intellectuals are." (Moscovici, 2001, p.228).

Wagner and Hayes (2005) define lay understanding as something that individuals experience the world with, instead of being organized and researched knowledge. Even though social representations are shared by many, they consist of layers and years of passed on knowledge and are rarely purely new ideas. Often, social representations operate at the lay theory level, which is where people first navigate the new information. Social representations rely on the fact that humans are social beings (Raudsepp, 2005) and thus social representations always exist within and between individuals and societies. Understanding how laypeople, the youth in Finland, describe and explain happiness in nature in the form of socially shared representations makes the current research timely and interesting for both happiness research and social representation research.

Thus, social representation theory provides an interesting framework for this study. First of all, Finland as a contextual setting provides certain pre-existing social representations to the youth: nature is strongly part of the national image and the country has been nominated as the "happiest". These socially shared collective ideas provide a framework on how they may

describe their personal experiences. This research will focus on how these experiences and descriptions are shared among them.

4.1 Processes of social representations

Social representations make the unfamiliar familiar through two main mechanisms: anchoring and objectifying (Moscovici, 1984). These processes may be seen as theoretical formulations as well as methodological tools in identifying social representations. *Anchoring* aims to locate an unfamiliar phenomenon to an already existing repertoire of categories, whereas *objectification* links the new phenomena to concrete symbols, images, and metaphors. For example, in the 1990s the new phenomenon 'genetic engineering' was anchored to cloning and objectified to 'Dolly the Sheep' (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). Finally, *naturalization* has occurred when something that was at first abstract becomes part of everyday social communication (Moscovici, 2008).

Anchoring is done by linking an abstract thing into a more familiar category (Moscovici, 1984), and connecting it to existing and shared knowledge (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Through anchoring, we attach familiar social representations to the unfamiliar one, by comparing and interpreting it. Anchoring of an unfamiliar phenomenon occurs via contrasting it against a familiar, socially constructed setting. Simply put, anchoring is classifying and naming something, a way to reduce and simplify things "to ordinary categories and images" (Moscovici, 1983, p.29).

The process of anchoring occurs through two main processes: classification and naming. According to Moscovici these processes "facilitate the interpretation of characteristics, the understanding of intentions and motives behind people's actions, in fact, to form opinions" (1983, p.37). Classifying happens through generalization or particularization. Generalizing means simplifying the new phenomena so that it fits with what we already know, whereas particularizing highlights the difference with the already known matter (Sakki, 2010). Classifying always assigns a value: either positive, negative, or a mixture of the two. Thus,

when something new and unknown occurs, it is first categorized as something familiar, and then named.

Objectifying allows the unfamiliar to take form through something that is concrete so that we can perceive and experience it with our senses. Objectification can occur through an object, person, or metaphor, which becomes a concrete symbol of the new abstract phenomenon (Moscovici, 1981). Essentially the unfamiliar phenomenon is symbolized through objectification (Wagner et al., 1999). Ontologization through metaphors means that elements can be seen or experienced as 'real' – something that can be touched and perceived (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In contrast with anchoring, objectification gives the unfamiliar concept a concrete existence, making it easier to identify, when "Images become elements of reality rather than elements of thought" (Moscovici, 1984, p.40). However, not everything can be related to an image due to the limited number of images available, some images are taboos, and some may be too difficult to concretize into an image.

The importance of cultural and social milieu should be noted in the formation of objectifications. Sperber (1985) argued that the process of a social group preferring one objectification to another can be compared with an epidemic. Where an illness only becomes an epidemic in a favorable setting allowing it to survive and spread, similarly, a new idea objectified into an image, metaphor, or symbol must first be accepted and understood by a majority of the population. It is less important whether the objectification is true or correct, but instead, it needs to fit and be good to think with, offering it a favorable setting. This highlights the importance of the social and cultural milieu, which either makes the objectification work or does not. As exemplified by 'psychoanalysis' many definitions can exist at once, as the social representations can be created in multiple settings simultaneously.

4.2 Criticism

Social representation theory has been criticized for its lack of common definition (Potter & Litton, 1985). However, as has been previously discussed, social representations can change over time, and instead of defining social representations, they should be characterized

(Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Moscovici did not want to give strict guidelines for social representations and purposefully left it open-ended to intrigue new research (Jodelet, 2008). In addition, SRT has been criticized due to its translation issues; the theory was translated into English over 50 years after its original publication in French. According to critics, during those fifty years, there had already been further elaborations within and surrounding the theory (Jodelet, 2008).

Jahoda (1988) has critiqued social representations by questioning how they differ from common sense, ideology, or culture. Social representations differ from attitudes, stereotypes, and opinions because Moscovici argued that these on their own are not capable of grasping the complexity of social representations that exist in human thought individually and socially (Moscovici & Marková, 1998). Marková (2000) argues that social representations aim to connect micro- and macro-social psychological processes with everyday common sense and discussions among people. It seems that much criticism has taken place due to the fluidity of the theory. SRT has been influenced by social, cognitive, and biological concepts, which has bothered other researchers (Volklein & Howarth, 2005). Social representations are however both cognitive and social, simply because cognition is socio-cultural (Marková, 2000). In this thesis, the fluidity between individual's conceptions and those that are shared socially is at focus: are there shared representations among the responses of the youth on matters of happiness?

4.3 Current research and social representations theory

"The peculiar power and clarity of representations – that is of social representations – derives from the success with which they control the reality of today through that of yesterday and the continuity which this presupposes." (Moscovici, 1984, p.10)

In this research, I am interested in examining what are the social representations of happiness and nature among youth, who are living in the "happiest country in the world". Are there commonalities in how they discuss nature connectedness through happiness? Is the youth lacking nature contact as has been discussed in media? What makes the youth happy

according to them? Scollon and King (2011) argue that lay theories of happiness may very much differ from those of scientific theories, making them more important to understand and evaluate. They may fill the gaps in theories or give new ideas for future research.

The social representations give people the possibility of objectifying something we cannot see. Such is the case with the abstract concept of 'happiness', which has become a target of consumerism and research. Even though one cannot buy the abstract concept of 'happiness', the representation of it is used as a means to sell experiences or goods. Indeed, "Such representations, thus, appear to us almost as material objects, insofar they are the product of our actions and communications." (Moscovici, 1984, p.12). Happiness is thus embodied in certain things one can purchase or examine through questionnaires.

The social representations in China differ from those in the Western countries. A study on how the Chinese discuss social representations of QOL showed that the main domains were health, family, work, social relations, and natural environment (Liu, 2006). Of these, natural environments are of interest to the current research. Natural environments were discussed for their importance through "having" as well as "being". "Having" repertoire explicated that people can use nature for needed purposes, which portrayed the power dimensions, as humans can use the resources of nature for economic purposes. In contrast, from the "being" repertoire, it was clear that people's QOL depended on the harmony between humans and nature. This is part of the Chinese ancient ideology, where humans are seen as part of nature and no rigid boundaries exist.

According to Howarth (2006), social representations should be understood though their historical roots, social functions at the moment and future implications. The industrial revolution changed the use of nature into economic gains instead of being used for survival. Previous research has examined social representations of Finnish history in textbooks. Hakoköngäs and Sakki (2016) discuss how natural landscapes have been typical objectifications of Finland. The textbook covers used images with landscapes, which were anchored to both countryside and nature, and urban milieus. Interestingly, in history books

for international audiences, the objectifications of Finland were of urban milieus. According to Finell (2005), nature is part of the Finnish national representation, and nature's role is central in the national anthem (see also: Hakokõngäs & Sakki, 2016).

Höijer (2011) used the social representation theory to examine representations of climate change in media. Media can naturalize social thinking and create representations that are shared in societies and groups, making it also relevant for the current study that used a marketing campaign video as a stimulus. They differentiate specific anchoring mechanisms: naming, emotional anchoring, thematic anchoring, metaphoric anchoring, and anchoring via basic antinomies. The naming of climate change in Swedish tabloid media consisted of "climate threat" and "the catastrophe"; naming makes gives the abstract phenomenon a more understandable frame. Naming, according to Moscovici (2000) may enrich the phenomenon by giving it new dimensions. Emotional anchoring is briefly mentioned by Moscovici (1993), and Höijer (2010) argues for its consideration in social representations theory: guilt is a common anchoring in climate change discussions. Thematic anchoring includes the use of antinomies (culture/nature) as well as metaphors. Metaphors describe things being something else to make them more understandable ("time is money"), Sakki et al. (2014), claim that metaphors are part of objectification.

Social representations become apparent within times of changes (Moscovici, 1984) when people are still trying to understand something that is not so familiar to them. "Character of social representations is revealed especially in times of crisis and upheaval, when a group or its images are undergoing a change" (Moscovici, 1984, p.54). Arguably, climate change has become a topic of this century, which is especially relevant considering that globally, the youth have been involved in Fridays for Future -movement.

A cross-cultural qualitative study by Rodriguez-Araneda (2013) examined the social representations of happiness among health and education professionals and students through open-ended questionnaires and focus groups in Italy and Chile. No other study with social representations on happiness was found from existing literature by the researcher. The

questionnaires were carried out in classrooms, with open-ended questions formatted, such as "To me happiness is..?". Conditions for happiness were divided into two types: external (environmental characteristics) and internal (person's characteristics). External conditions included affection, safety, and perfect environments, whereas internal conditions had two types: biological characteristics and psychological capital. These findings were in line with eudaimonic and hedonic experiences of happiness, and they also noted the importance of collectivism-individualism aspect in their findings.

Mass media adds another layer to social representations, as they are known to influence representations in modern societies (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). The media are not thought to impose ideas on individuals, but instead, there is a constant dialogue occurring between people and society. Indeed, there is always a layer of knowledge from previous generations in the materials people produce. Memories and traditional structures steer the common sense (Moscovici, 1984) in addition to the mass media's communication. The advertisement in this study also reproduces representations (Fairclough, 2002).

Thus, it makes an interesting starting point for this research, where Finnish youth are asked to share how they individually discuss happiness in nature context, which then provides an opportunity to see whether shared representations exist. The results from this research can be compared with previous findings, in order to see whether these representations have changed over time. It is not expected that the youth know the benefits of happiness on one's mental health or how research may have defined happiness, but indeed the research will focus on their perceptions – the lay representations.

4.4 Research questions

The purpose of the current research is to understand the shared representations of happiness and nature. Social representations theory will be used as a framework for this research. Previous research has relied on quantitative measures focusing on people's happiness and nature-connectedness, instead of gaining more understanding of the lay perceptions of these

themes. This thesis aims to better understand how nature may also be central to one's happiness and well-being.

Finland makes an interesting setting for this research for two reasons. First, the frequent and consecutive nominations as the happiest country in the world have placed Finland to local and international news, but little has been investigated about the shared common thoughts on happiness among the younger citizens of Finland. Second, nature is considered to be a part of the Finnish national representation, and nature is readily available and accessible for all age groups: how does the Finnish youth view nature, and what are the connections between nature and happiness according to the youth? The purpose of this research is to explore the lay concepts and experiences of happiness in nature; the shared thoughts that are perhaps mundane and so often go unnoticed but could be useful for the health of individuals and Earth. More specifically I seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the shared ideas the youth have about nature, and of happiness in nature?
2. How are these social representations objectified or anchored?
3. Do the youth have shared social representations about nature, and more specifically about happiness in nature?

5 METHODS

The data used in this study were collected as a part of a bigger research project LUODE during March and April of 2019. The data used in this research was collected specifically for this thesis, and LUODE enabled an ethically approved access to collect data from participants in Lahti secondary schools. Since the participants were under 18-year-olds, ethical issues were of great importance. The research permission was granted by the Lahti schools to the LUODE project before data collection occurred (LUODE 2018). Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The data consisted of written responses (72 pages) from 9th graders (n=355) in Lahti secondary schools. All responses were anonymous, and the data does not provide any information that would make participant identification possible.

5.1 Participants

The participants consisted of 355 adolescents (F=159, M=164, Other=4) who were all only months away from graduating the 9th grade in Lahti secondary schools. The participants were 15-16 years old and took part in the study during the same compulsory class ("guidance counseling and working life competence"). Not all participants informed their age or gender.

5.2 Data collection procedure

I and my thesis supervisor formed and wrote the response paper and questions in Helsinki, which were then sent to the LUODE researchers in Lahti, who carried out the data collection in the classes. The participants were briefly told about the research, how it was voluntary to take part, it was not compulsory to write anything, and that their replies would remain anonymous. After the brief introduction, they were shown the video stimulus and were then asked to reply to the questions with as much detail as possible. They had approximately 20-30 minutes to write their responses to the printed-out forms. After data collection, the responses were mailed to the University of Helsinki, where I transcribed the responses as soon as I received them.

5.3 Stimulus: Video advertisement

The video used as a stimulus, when collecting data, was a marketing campaign video that promotes Finland as a tourist destination to foreign visitors. It was used since it included controversial statements about Finns' experiences of happiness and nature. Visual elicitation may produce rich qualitative material, as it can evoke feelings and memories among the viewers (Harper, 2002). Since it was not clear what kind of responses the data collection would yield, we also discussed the possibility of analyzing the video as a source for social representations on its own. However, since the responses provided enough detail for the analysis, the video remained purely as a stimulus in this research.

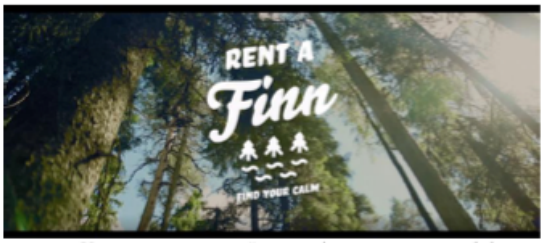
The marketing video was one of the first videos of the "Rent a Finn" -campaign that advertised Finland to foreign visitors. Visit Finland – "The official travel guide of Finland" – is a unit of Business Finland, fully owned by the Finnish Government, whose main goal is

to develop Finland's international image as a destination. Their 2019 initiative "Rent a Finn – Find Your Calm" searched for regular Finns to be "Happiness Guides" for visiting tourists for three summer days. The Finns would share their knowledge with the chosen tourists on how to find calmness through nature-related activities. The campaign reached 149 countries and over 1.3 billion people. More than 6000 applications from 124 countries were sent to the campaign. The campaign and the video were timely representations of happiness, nature, Finnish culture, and marketing trends that even on its own it would provide an interesting research topic for social sciences as well as business research.

During the months of data collection and preliminary write-up of the thesis, the campaign progressed. The video became unavailable from the source; thus, it was downloaded and uploaded to YouTube to a private account for easy access during data collection. Also, the video's content was outlined and explained in detail, so that it is as clear as possible to comprehend the content of the video and 'see' what the participants saw (see Appendix). This simplified summary of the video is solely my interpretation and it was done before the data collection. Overall the video portrays 11 different Finnish scenes and five different persons. The video's duration was 40 seconds.

5.4 The questionnaires

YK:n "The World Happiness" -tutkimuksen mukaan Suomi on maailman onnellisin maa. Video on osa matkailun edistämiskeskus Visit Finlandin "Rent a Finn" (Vuokraa suomalainen) -kampanjaa. Kampanjassa tavalliset suomalaiset toimivat "onnellisuusoppaina" matkailijoille, jotka haluavat tutustua Suomeen.



Käännös: Kuusien ja koivujen katveessa on meidän onnemme. Kun muut menevät terapiaan, me suomalaiset suuntaamme luontoon. Juuri se tekee meistä maailman onnellisimman kansan. Nyt jokaisen on aika saada mahdollisuus oppia parhailta. Me, tavalliset suomalaiset, toivotamme vierailijat tervetulleeksi löytämään oman yhteytensä luontoon. "Vuokraa suomalainen – löydä rauhasi".

Vastaajan tiedot: Sukupuoli M [ ] N [ ] Muu [ ] Ikä:___

Figure 1. A screenshot of the questionnaire

Figure 1 shows the briefing provided in all of the questionnaires. The first part of the text gives a brief summary of the video's purpose ("According to the UN's "The World Happiness" -report, Finland is the happiest country in the world. The video is part of Visit Finland's "Rent a Finn" -campaign, where regular Finns are "happiness guides" to travelers visiting Finland"). In addition to the two screenshots from the video, the text was also translated from English to Finnish so that everyone would understand the video's main message. After the briefing, the responder could mark their gender (male, female, or other) and age, before answering the questions. All the questionnaires were printed on A4-sized paper, and empty lines were provided on both sides. In those cases, where there was a "Question 2", this was written to the other side of the paper.

Table 1. Questionnaire questions

Participants	Question 1	Question 2	Translation
1-82	Mitä video kertoo mielestäsi onnellisuudesta? Pohdi, tekeekö luonto sinut onnelliseksi? Miksi kyllä, miksi ei?		What does the video say about happiness in your opinion? Discuss, whether nature makes you happy? Why yes? Why not?)
83-149	Mitä video kertoo mielestäsi suomalaisuudesta?	Tutkimuksen mukaan suomalaiset nuoret mainitsevat sosiaaliset suhteet (ystävät, perhe) luontoa useammin onnellisuuden yhteydessä. Kerro mitä onnellisuus sinulle tarkoittaa? Anna esimerkkejä onnellisuudesta.	What does the video say about the Finnish nationality? / According to research Finnish youth mention social relationships (friends, family) more often than nature alongside happiness. Discuss what happiness means to you? Give examples of happiness.
150-260	Mitä video kertoo mielestäsi onnellisuudesta? Pohdi, tekeekö luonto sinut onnelliseksi? Miksi kyllä, miksi ei?		What does the video say about happiness in your opinion? Discuss, whether nature makes you happy? Why yes? Why not?
261-280	Mitä video kertoo mielestäsi onnellisuudesta? Pohdi, tekeekö luonto sinut onnelliseksi? Miksi kyllä, miksi ei?		What does the video say about happiness in your opinion? Discuss, whether nature makes you happy? Why yes? Why not?
281-355	Video antaa kuvan suomalaisten onnellisuudesta.	Tutkimuksen mukaan suomalaiset nuoret mainitsevat sosiaaliset suhteet (ystävät, perhe) luontoa	The video depicts the happiness of Finns. What do you think is true on the video? What is not?

	Mikä on videossa mielestäsi totta? Mikä ei?	useammin onnellisuuden yhteydessä. Kerro mitä onnellisuus sinulle tarkoittaa? Anna esimerkkejä onnellisuudesta.	/ According to research Finnish youth mention social relationships (friends, family) more often than nature alongside happiness. Discuss what happiness means to you? Give examples of happiness.

Table 1 shows which questions were asked from each group and the number of participants. According to Apo (1995) in a thematic writing task, the researcher only presents the topic, after which questions are portrayed under the theme, as these are meant to make the answering easier. The benefit of this is to see the participant's cognitive patterns, which have been minimally influenced by the researcher (Apo, 1995). The responses were transcribed shortly after data collection occurred, which made it possible to reformat the questions to gain more textual data. For example, adding another question to the other side of the paper made some participants elaborate on their thoughts in more detail. Since there were many different classes taking part, and each had a limited time to respond (20-30 minutes), they were given different sets of questions to get a diverse set of responses on the phenomena.

5.5 Description of data

First, I transcribed all the responses to word documents. When compiled into one document without page breaks, there were 72 pages of text in total. Each response was labeled in the format of "Student X, gender, age" (if provided); e.g. "Student 26, Male, 15". The numbering was simply done in the random order the papers were gathered. Any direct quotes from the participants' responses were shortened to Sxx, e.g. "S26", and used when referring to these responses. All the responses were used in the final analysis. Based on data familiarization, there were no distinct differences between genders and thus gender differences were disregarded in analysis. The gender-neutral pronoun "they" will be used instead of he/she, as it is recommended to avoid language that assumes gender/sex binary (Cameron & Stinson, 2019). Besides, in the Finnish language third-person singular ("hän") is gender-neutral and would have been used if the thesis was written in Finnish.

All the responses were in Finnish, apart from a few words written in English. I have translated all the extracts used in this thesis. The responses varied from one word (e.g. S54: "Onnellisin?"), to lists, to drawings, and short essays. This depicts the diversity of responses; some wrote their responses in a very detailed manner and shared personal things from their lives. In comparison to the detailed and poetic descriptions, a handful of participants wrote very short answers, had exact copies of their friends' answers, or had witty/sarcastic answers.

The transcribing process replicated the responses in a detailed manner, noting down line breaks, uses of lists, and noting down strikethrough words and/or sentences S43: "~~Luonnossa pys~~". Drawings were typed as emoticons or given written descriptions in Finnish, e.g. S8:"[A pine tree with a smiley, a sun with a smiley]". Mistakes in language were not fixed, and words that were difficult to interpret, were noted miscellaneous, e.g. S42:"[unclear: tarvetta/tunnetta]". Not all these accounts were necessary for this thesis, but they added depth to the transcribing process and aided with the data familiarization process.

5.6 Thematic analysis and social representations

The analysis followed the clear structure of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, familiarizing with the data through transcribing, reading, and re-reading through the data ensured a developed familiarity with the data at hand. Familiarizing with data took place during the transcribing process, and it was easy to make notes of interesting commonalities from the data soon after data collection. Re-writing what the participants had written, gave an insight into the data. After all the responses were transcribed, the data was thoroughly read through without doing any coding. Reading, re-reading, and familiarizing with the data took place multiple times and has been noted as a "key phase of data analysis" (Bird, 2005, p. 277).

Second, the data was gone through with Atlas.ti, employing thematic analysis, which is often used to examine spoken and written language (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial coding process totaled over 500 different codes. Many of these codes were simply synonyms, or clearly part of the same code (i.e. rauha, rauhallinen, rauhallisuus, rauhassa => rauha), which were combined in the iterative phases of analysis. Through classification, the aim is to

identify contents and meanings, like main themes and subjects, from the data that relate to the topic on hand (Chi, 1997). The codes were tagged and named within each data item. As guided by Braun & Clarke (2006), as many themes/patterns were coded as possible, so that data saturation was reached, i.e. no more new codes emerged from the data.

Table 2. Examples from the coding process

Original quote	**Code given**
”For me personally, nature is close to my heart, because it calms my mind and it is nice to walk there and listen to the sounds of birds.” -S51	Sense of hearing – sounds Activity
”For me happiness means joy and light in life, enjoying the small daily things.” -S86	Happiness – small things Happiness - light
“Clean nature makes me happy, if there is any trash or other waste then that just makes me angry instead”-S206	Clean nature Pollution Nature preservation

Flick (2009) states that when a computer program is used to analyze results, it does not do the analysis but only aids in the process. In order to answer the research questions, the analysis focused on units of analysis: words and sentences that portray representations. While selections were made, these original quotes were given specific codes. I also made notes of interesting occurrences and utterances to a separate document during the analysis process. These notes helped to clarify interesting themes and focus points for analysis.

For reflexivity purposes, it is important to take into account my personal input to the data analysis. My interpretations alter what I ended up picking from the data and found meaningful or interesting. Such examples from my notes were certain themes and quotes: Mental health aspect; Climate change; “All things bring sadness and joy, so I don’t even know if there is such a thing as real happiness” (S324). I also placed some intriguing quotes under a code of “Title options”; the current title was drawn from those extracts.

Finally, the codes were placed under bigger common themes. Flick (2009) notes that when there is a lot of interesting data in the results, it is important to decide before data analysis what the focuses are, and which questions the research aims to answer. Focusing on the definitions and experiences of happiness and nature helped with the analysis as this narrowed down the focus of coding. Themes were formed based on the codes once the main themes fit to answer the research questions. Patton (1990) suggests using dual criteria when thematic categories are being reviewed – internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity; themes should be easily distinguished from one another while they should create a coherent whole together. When themes did not fit, they were either combined with other more suitable themes, or a new theme was created, or they were eliminated from the analysis.

Due to the focus of this research, themes, and data extracts that do not fit into these research questions were left out from the analysis. It is however worth mentioning that the hierarchy of basic needs (Maslow, 1943) was evident in the responses: physiological (food, water, warmth, rest), safety (security, safety), belongingness and love needs (intimate relationships, friends), esteem (accomplishment) and even self-actualization were all present in the responses, and have been studied in previous research (Pessi, 2008; De Paola et al., 2020). Some are also evident in the analysis, but these themes were not explored systemically or in a detailed manner because of the scope of this thesis.

After reviewing the themes, the data was read through again; first, to assess whether the themes work concerning the whole dataset and second, to find any missing data pieces that would fit into the chosen themes. Themes should tell a story of the data to the readers and should be actively constructed by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Description of themes requires the use of multiple citations from data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are common pitfalls of using thematic analysis, which should be avoided. Braun and Clarke (2006) mention the use of data collection questions as themes in the analysis. However, in this case, the questions varied, and the data analysis was driven by the themes found in data, instead of focusing too much on the proposed questions. Also, many leave the data analysis under little work, and extracts are used without analyzing their meaning. A weak and unconvincing analysis has an overlap of themes, or they don't work, and a rich

description of data is missing. A weak analysis also does not take into account an alternative reading of data; a pattern in data is never complete and non-contradicted and this should be noted in the analysis. Interesting examples from data should be given some thought and considered from multiple viewpoints.

Social representations theory focuses on how social phenomena is represented by individuals and institutions, and how such representations evolve. Thus, thematic analysis can capture and organize diverse social representations (Joffe, 2011). This allowed a more focused analysis of responses and functioned as a deductive approach. The processes of making representations through anchoring and objectification were at focus.

5.7 Focus on personal accounts

S223: "Nature makes people happy. Yes it does, in nature one can think of their own thoughts. Happiness is also in our own hands, we do not need therapy or anything, we Finns go out to the nature, which makes us happy. It also makes me happy to be at out summer cabin that is in the nature."

In some of the responses, it was easier to choose extracts where personal opinions were reflected in the responses. For example, it is evident in the quote above that the participant first replied with "Nature makes people happy" to the video-focused question "What does the video say about happiness in your opinion?". The next sentence is their own opinion, replying to the second question that is of interest to social representation theory, and thus this research: "Discuss, whether nature makes you happy? Why yes? Why not?". They replied directly to the question with "yes" and exemplifying through "it also makes me happy", which reflected their viewpoint. The participant used the contents of the stimulus to frame their own opinion ("we do not need therapy or anything"). In addition, they used examples from beyond the video's content ("summer cabin") which shows that the video functioned as a stimulant, but the responses were also drawn from personal experiences. In the light of this example, all the chosen extracts in the analysis focused on answers, where the participant was clearly stating their own opinion. The personal accounts of these representations are the main focus, and responses that reflected opinions about the video were left unconsidered.

However, sometimes recognizing the personal account was mixed with the thoughts they had about the video.

6 RESULTS

The youth's experiences and definitions of nature and happiness in nature were detailed, and at times poetic. Based on these responses, the youth in Lahti were connected to nature, and this connection was employed holistically: they described their experiences in nature through descriptions of mind, body, and senses. Also, nature as such was described through different images, places, and details. Thus, nature was a place for being, for doing, and for engaging, which are explored through the shared social representations.

The main findings of this research were the social representations of nature, and the holistic experiences of happiness in nature, which were explicated through multisensory experiences. Two main themes were identified from the analysis: 1. Definitions of "nature" through two sub-themes (lay definitions and definitions within the societal context) and 2. Experiencing happiness in nature via three sub-themes (a place to be, a place to do, and a place to engage). Happiness in nature was experienced through a peace of mind, activities in nature and active presence portrayed through sensory experiences. Figure 2 represents the visualization of these findings.

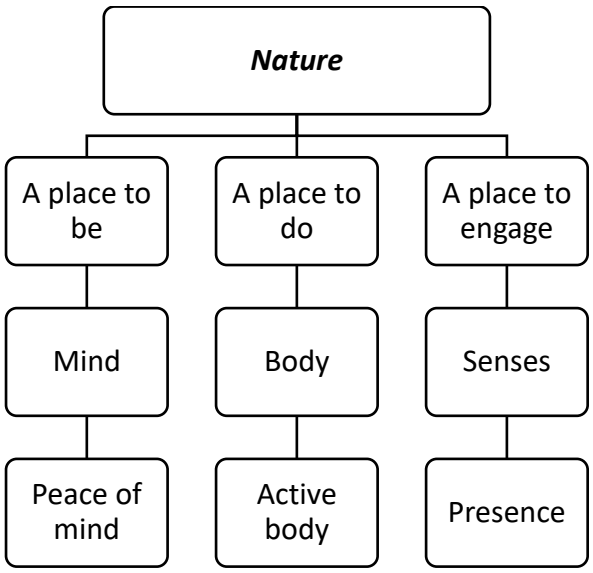


Figure 2. Social representations of happiness in nature

Table 3. presents the occurrence and layout of the themes. First, the two main themes are on the left, broken down to the sub-themes and the codes used in analysis. The codes were identified more or less directly from the participants' responses, whereas the sub-themes reflect my interpretations and categorizations of these codes.

Table 3. Occurrence of themes

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
1.Nature defined	1.1. Lay definitions of nature (n=219)	Clean nature (44) Eff. Pos. Fresh air (32) Eff. Pos. forest (30) Happiness - summer (25) Summer cabin (17) Water (11)
	1.2. Nature within the societal context (n=106)	Nature preservation (19) Finland vs. other countries (15) Social welafare (11) Happiness – Safety in Finland (8) Pollution (4)
2.Holistic experiences	2.1. Peace of mind (n=285)	Peace (117) Time to think (30) Relax (27) Alone (16) No stress, rush (9) Peace of mind, silence, alone Time to think, time to be oneself
	2.2. Active body (n=106)	Eff. Pos. Activity (63) Happiness – hobbies (33) Eff. Pos. Together (6) Exercise, running, hiking, boating, motorbike, fishing, horseback riding, taking the dog for a walk, picking mushrooms/berries
	2.3. Engaging through the senses (N=150)	Sounds, silence, colors, odours, animals Small things

The first theme consists of social representations of nature. These responses were divided into two sub-themes: lay definitions of nature, and nature within the context of societal issues. The second main theme "Holistic experiences" answers the research question: what social representations do the youth use to describe happiness in nature? The sub-themes unravel the youths' holistic relationship with nature, as the youths discuss their experiences through mind, body, and senses. The use of senses was considered as a sub-theme due to their

prevalence and uniqueness for social representations theory; however, the senses blend into the other themes. The bodily experiences consisted more of activities that took place in nature, either alone or together with others.

I will go through the results of the thematic analysis by focusing on the main themes and describing the sub-themes in more detail through extracts, which have been chosen to exemplify necessary points, to present the data in the best possible way. The themes are partly overlapping, so at times they appear simultaneously in the chosen extracts. While exemplifying the main themes and the sub-themes, I will discuss the formation of social representations through the processes of anchoring and objectification. Locating the uses of objectification and anchoring were at times quite clear (e.g. "*Summer and warmth make me happy"*), but at times proved difficult to identify. Not all accounts were easily deducted to either objectifications or anchoring.

6.1 Theme I – Definitions of nature

The first theme focuses on how the youth described nature, which contextualizes this research's context for the occurrence of happiness. Overall, the youth described nature in rich detail. Nature was not simply viewed as one specific entity, but the representations were diverse: the participants used objectifications by using descriptors like forests, trails, water areas, summer cabins, places with beautiful views, and specific nature places around Lahti. In addition to the detailed nature descriptions, nature was discussed within the societal context of Finland and anchored through the comparison with other countries' natures. The youth discussed examples like equality, social benefits, and education, which explained in part how they felt enabled to find happiness in nature. To exemplify, 'clean nature' was the most common way to describe nature, yet when framed with climate change and pollution, the youth placed the existence of nature to a bigger and current societal frame.

6.1.1 Lay definitions of nature

Clean nature/fresh air was the most recurrent way to describe nature by the participants. In the coding process, fresh air was considered to be a part of the clean nature theme. For example, the clean natural environment was seen as a place where one can get rid of "bad thoughts for a moment" (S15).

”Finland’s clean, beautiful and versatile nature influences my mood at least. It is always nice to come back to Finland from trips abroad. If there was not such a rich nature in Finland, it would surely impact the results of the research.” -S264

“Clean nature makes me happy, if there is any trash or other waste then that just makes me angry instead”-S206

The extracts above exemplify the process of experiencing happiness through the use of “influences” and “makes”. These verbs portray how nature has a very direct impact on their happiness. By comparing Finland with trips abroad, the student uses anchoring: “always nice” to return to Finland, which has “rich nature” are qualities also positions the nature abroad to the antonyms of poor. Use of rich is also a personification; this gives nature human-like qualities, in a similar manner as “makes” and “influences” do. In contrast, in the second extract, the participant discusses how clean nature is a prerequisite for their happiness, and trash in nature will evoke negative feelings instead. The youth shared a social representation of nature as clean with fresh air, which was important to their nature experiences.

“Nature does make me happy. When I go for a run/walk in the forest, I can remove all the negative thoughts from my head.” -S222

Forests were the most common objectification of nature environments. The happiness in forests was experienced because of the calming atmosphere: it was a place to experience silence, smells, and the change of seasons. Also, it was used as a place for activities like running, walking, and skiing. In the extract above, happiness is evaluated as a state without negativity in their head. Through the activities in nature, they can have only positive thoughts in their head. Thus, happiness seems to exist more in the ‘mind’, but bodily action is a method to gain it.

“Nature makes me happy because it is peaceful and quiet there almost like time would stop. Also, the beauty of nature and fine sceneries bring positivity to me. Lapland’s

> *sceneries in the winter and rocks and heath forests [kangasmetsät] in the summertime are the most beautiful sceneries in Finland in my opinion." -S161*

The metaphor of 'time-stopping', an objectification, further explicates how nature is a *peaceful* and silent place. Using the metaphor explains the fondness one has for these nature moments; one can forget everything else and be more present in that place and time. The participant discusses how nature's *beauty* and beautiful views cause 'positivity', their description of happiness. Also, they use sight ('sceneries') and hearing ('quiet') in this description, as well as very distinct examples, objectifications, of the most beautiful sceneries from Finnish nature. In Lapland, the most northern part of Finland, it is most beautiful during the winter. The objectification of elements that are more distinct in southern Finland, like "rocks" and heath forests, are used to describe nature in the summertime. These particular elements provide an image of what nature consists of for the youth.

Participants often explicated their happiness in relation to the conditions outdoors. *Summers* were the most frequent season in the responses; sunlight, warmth, and nature's greenery were objectifications of happiness in nature. These examples clarify how the social representations of nature are multisensory experiences: warmth is tactile, whereas winter's darkness refers to sight. Through anchoring, winters were portrayed in a more negative light as it was used as the comparison for summers that were the "happiest times" (S21) of their life.

> *"Summer and warmth make me happy and with that <u>thought in mind</u> I can get over the winter depression when everything is cold and dark"-S125*

The participant describes how just the 'thought' of knowing that summer is coming again helps them to get over the depressing winter season. They use a mental objectification, perhaps a memory of summer, as they describe their experience of happiness in nature. For them, a mental image is strong enough to produce feelings of happiness, which eventually help them to "get over" the cold and dark winter season. They use winter depression to describe their mood during winter when there is a lack of happiness. Indeed, the antonyms cold and dark represent the opposite of happiness, that the summer season provides.

Happiness and nature were connected through certain descriptions that were deemed as Finnish. *"Mökki"*, typically a quaint Finnish cabin that families tend to have located in nature was mentioned by a multitude of participants. The summer cabin functioned as an easily noticeable objectification; a social representation that is indeed Finnish.

> *"At the cabin, away from the city, it is nice to be at the lake and walk in the forest." -S205*

> *"Cabin life in nature and by the lakeshore is important to me, but in the long run it is boring." -S156*

The first extract illustrates how the cabin provides a contrasting environment to the city life, similarly to the previously mentioned comparison of Finland to countries abroad. By being "away" from the city, the cabin is located in a different setting. However, when contrasting nature with the city, they do not classify one to be better than the other: at the cabin, nature is closer, can easily be enjoyed through blue (lake) and green (forest) spaces. The second extract also unravels that spending time at the cabin offers an opportunity for a change; for them, this change is not needed as much as there are opportunities to leave the city for the cabin. Perhaps happiness is explained through the possibility for a change: having the contrast and access to both city and nature, makes it possible to experience and appreciate the happiness in nature. However, it could lose its appeal if it were to continue for a long time.

> *"Nature makes me peaceful and happy. One can get away from the city noises." -S74*

It was evident in the responses that many compared the calming effect of nature to life in the *cities*, where things were portrayed as noisier and more hectic. In the excerpt, the participant claims that nature provides a place to escape to from the city, where sounds are "noises", and the peacefulness nature provides is lacking. Only one participant discussed how they viewed cities as their preferred environments instead of nature. When such categorizing is used, anchoring takes place.

> *"Instead of the forests, I enjoy the city lights and bustle more, but I understand why nature brings happiness to many people. For some, the silence and brightness are calming, but for me, the city's bustle and the certain kind of lively feeling are more calming. It is the best thing to look at the pink sky after a long school day when the sun is setting in the afternoon and street lights are lit. More vast nature is a little bit too vast and mystical for me." -S49*

As mentioned before, in this excerpt too, the forest is used to objectify nature. It should be noted, that they first mention the representations others hold ("for some"), and then discuss their own experience with the distinction that their opinion differentiates from the more popular social representations others have. However, they discuss the sunset in the city as the best part of the day and use the sensory experiences of seeing the "pink sky" sunset in the background of the streetlights; in this case, the streetlights are an objectification of the city milieu. They present natural phenomena existing in the background of city objects, sounds, and mood – perhaps these 'city elements' reduce the vastness of nature for them. The calmness exists in the liveliness and hectic lifestyle of the city, whereas nature is seen as "too vast and mystical"; cities are perhaps more predictable and organized, whereas nature remains as something too broad and abstract, perhaps even scary.

> *"In nature, it is nice to hike for example in Koli and watch the beauty of nature and spend time with the family."-S29*

> *"With my family, we love nature outings, for example in Lapakisto or Hollola or Pikkuvesku and it makes me happy in many ways to spend time together with the family." -S47*

The participants also named *specific nature locations* in Finland. Through these objectifications, they named Finnish places that produce instant mental images of nature, at least to those who are familiar with the locations. These locations are used to provide more coherent representations of nature. For example, a national park (Koli), was mentioned, and it is known for its distinct sceneries from high viewpoints. In the previous citation, the wintertime Lapland was also mentioned, making it fit into this category as well. Places that

are located closer to Lahti (Lapakisto, Hollola, Pikkuvesku) were also mentioned by the other participant. This use of specific locations shows that the youth enjoy nearby nature as well as destinations further away. Both of these excerpts also bring forth the social aspect of going to nature through "spending time" with the family: nature was a place where the family came together and spent leisure time with each other. Happiness consisted of family time and nature provided a setting for it. Indeed, social relations were discussed by many participants in their responses and this will be further elaborated in the theme of "Nature as a place to do".

6.1.2 Nature within the society

The youth also discussed nature in the frame of a Finnish societal context. The social benefits, issues of equality, free education, and climate change were brought up in the responses. Mental health issues were also described in a very honest manner. This adds more depth to the representations of nature; nature exists within a larger context, in this case within the borders of Finland. "Nature conservation" -code was the most recurring one in this sub-theme's responses.

> *"Nature is the most beautiful thing in the world, so we must take care of it. Earth is the only place to live, and now something must be done." -S21*

> *"Nature is beautiful and calming. It is a shame that it is destroyed so much. I like to be out in nature, and I hope that still as an adult I would be able to go out there." -S48*

Climate change was a part of the youth's representation of nature. There was a shared worry regarding the future state of nature and the youth were calling out for societal action in their responses, demanding that nature should be protected ("we must take care of it"). The extracts above show the youth's concern of nature's near future: they want to continue spending time in nature and they hope that they still can do so in their adult years, shows how their concern that nature may no longer exist as 'beautiful and calming' in near future. In their opinion, nature's value lies in its beauty, and nature preservation can upkeep this beauty.

> *"It would also be good to preserve forests because I love going out in nature for walks or to think about things." -S124*

Another participant values nature because it provides a milieu for both physical and mindful activities. Being able to utilize nature for these reasons, is enough of a reason for preservation. Moreover, they suggest the preservation of forests as direct and distinct action. This is in contrast with a discussion of nature being Finland's most "valuable thing" (S222) and how it needs protection, but why it is valuable and what the type of protection was not evaluated by the participant.

> *"We Finns are very happy. We have good living conditions. We have clean water, food, a good health care system, education. We are a happy nation. One can go to the forest to relax and sort out thoughts. It does not cost anything, unlike therapy. It is lovely to be in nature. Our clean forests and good living conditions make us happy. […] There are poverty and unemployment in Finland, but they are well taken care of. Everyone is considered." -S283*

In addition, the youth discussed the benefits offered by the welfare state. Living in a country that provides citizens with social benefits, offers "good conditions" (S212) for experiencing happiness. The citation above explicates how clean nature is a continuation of the Finnish welfare society. In addition to taking care of all the citizens, nature is also considered and appreciated. Furthermore, Finland was discussed as being the happiest country in the world because it is a *peaceful* country. This state of peace provides an overall safe environment, making it possible that everyone can access nature.

> *"Family and friends are important. Cleanliness and safety. I can do what I want and I can have an impact. Nature nice people. Basic needs are the core of everything. No one is bullied nor hurt, and everyone is treated equally." -S117*

> *"Happiness is in nature. The fact that one can go there whenever and anybody can." -S168*

Equal rights among citizens were seen significant on one's happiness: the possibility to have an impact, to be autonomous, and to be treated equally were seen as important values. Nature was seen as a place anyone can access whenever they want; this is used perhaps as an antonym to the fact that this is not a commodity everywhere in the world. This links back to the theme of safety and peace in nature, as it is safe to go to nature no matter when one does it, and who does it.

The youth also took a critical stance on the video's claim on the uses of therapy in Finland. They challenged the claim in the video and mentioned how Finns do go to therapy. They discussed this claim to be "misleading" and "questionable" (S1), and thus challenged the social representation offered by the video, where nature is represented as something that will help one to overcome all issues. After all, this is a portrayal of Finns to the foreigners, and, interestingly, the participants wanted to correct some of these claims.

> *"I think the comment we don't go to therapy but nature is just wrong. Suicide rates are high, and to those nature probably does not have much influence like therapy does." -S367*

This participant challenges the claim of Finns using nature as a replacement for therapy by contrasting the happiness nomination with suicide rates. Here, the antonym for happiness is portrayed through suicide, and the participant uses statistical knowledge to challenge the video's claim. According to them, nature is not a cure for one with suicidal thoughts, which presents a person's complete lack of happiness. Instead, nature is more of a preventative method, which should have been explained more thoroughly in the video, that offered misleading claims according to the participant.

6.2 Theme II - Happiness in nature

Next, I will move on to the themes that describe how the youth experienced happiness in nature. Their descriptions were vivid and detailed, where social representations were not simply places, nature elements or mental images, but the responses included detailed multisensory experiences of nature where mind, body and senses were able to provide holistic experiences. I decided to look at these different representations through three distinctive

routes. First, ”Nature as a place to be” highlights how nature remedies the mind of participants. Second, ”Nature as a place to do”, gathers activities which are done either alone, together with others or pets. Finally, ”Nature as a place to experience/sense” draws on responses that discussed how in nature the senses were heightened and noted.

6.2.1 Nature as a place for peace of mind

In Finnish “Rauha” (translated as calmness, peace, tranquility) was by far the most frequent term and social representation in the responses. Indeed, “rauha” can be translated in various ways, and it was therefore used in many different contexts in the responses. Not only was nature seen as peaceful, but it made the youth feel more at peace, and as discussed previously, the word was even used to describe Finland as a peaceful country.

> *“In Finland it is easier to relax than in many other countries, because people have good opportunities to go out into the clean nature to calm down and relax. For me nature is an important upkeep of peace of mind. Going outdoors is essential for me mentally and physically.” -S183*

As mentioned, nature is placed within the welfare system of Finland (“good opportunities”). They also contrast Finland to other countries, which shows how relaxing in nature is not applicable everywhere else in the world. The participant explains how going to nature is important for their body and mind; both of these help them upkeep “a peace of mind”, which also portrays the idea of holistic well-being.

> *“Nature makes me happy. Occasionally I go to the forest and listen to my own head.” -S233*

> *“Nature makes me happy, because it is peaceful there and you can be in your own world. Meanwhile you can forget everything else when you are in the forest.”-S237*

The first extract portrays how nature provides a space, where one can be mindful and direct their attention inwards. Listening to their “own head” portrays how they listen to their own thoughts. Similarly, being in one’s “own world”, an objectification, depicts a similar escape

inward to one's head – accessing a place of imagination and one's own thoughts. This is contrasted with being able to "forget everything else", one can peacefully be on their own without distractions and others in nature.

> *"Nature makes me much happier and nature shows peace where you don't have to be always perfect. I like nature a lot because it calms me down. You don't always have to be on your phone, you can go relax a little in nature." -S259*

In this extract, the participant mentions how in nature there is no need to be "perfect", but one is allowed to be 'imperfect' and unavailable. There are no constraints of everyday life settings present in nature, and there is no judgement of perfection/imperfection present either. By being alone in nature one can free themselves from social situations, that include judging and availability. Indeed, nature is seen as a place where one can be unavailable and unreached by mobile phone: in nature one can simply just be. Many went out to nature alone, especially to gain a peace of mind or to think.

> *"Nature makes me happy, yes. When I go for runs/walks in the forest, I can remove all the negative thoughts from the head." -S222*

This participant discusses that when they go out to nature alone for a run/walk, the activity is a way to remove negative thoughts which in turn makes them happier. For them, happiness means the nonexistence of negative thoughts, and nature provides a setting for this activity. In nature, it is attainable and simple to get rid of negative thoughts, as the use of "removing" something would explain.

> *"Nature does not really make me happier, but it calms me down. The peace of nature helps me to forget the rush and everything else that causes stress. Nature does not however make me happier, because I don't think that happiness consists of only one factor, but it is an entity consisting of multiple factors." -S155*

In contrast, another participant explained how nature does not necessarily make them happier, but it helps them to forget the busyness and stress. It is interesting that they say that even though nature can make them forget their stress and busyness, this is not a direct causal

relationship that would also increase their happiness. Instead, happiness consists of multiple parts: happiness is an "entity" where multiple things coexist. This is a more detailed consideration of what happiness consists of; it is not simply the deletion of negative thoughts and existence of positive ones, but their coexistence instead.

> *"For me, happiness is not the lack of sadness. It is living with it. You cry when you feel like crying and stop when you stop. It is always calm before the storm, but that calmness feels better after the storm." -S282*

In a similar manner, another participant describes feelings of happiness, but through natural phenomena. They explained their realization that happiness also consists of living with negative feelings, such as sadness. Being able to feel sadness, also heightens the feelings of happiness, which makes their coexistence perhaps necessary. They describe these opposing feelings through objectification and more specifically metaphors: the natural occurrence of a storm portrays sadness/tears, whereas a calm that comes before and after the storm is happiness.

6.2.2 Nature as a place to do

The youth also ventured outdoors to do things alone, together with others or with pets. The activities were seen as beneficial for the mind and body. Interestingly, only one participant mentioned how they like to "play" (S202) outdoors. "Leikkiä" in Finnish is a specific verb used for children's play. Most of the activities mentioned were indeed active; none mentioned praying or meditating for example, even though the previous sub-theme could be labelled as such.

> *"In my opinion there is a lot of depression in Finland and yeah for example because of polar nights people go to therapy. When I was depressed I went to see a psychiatrist and, well, I got bored because I couldn't move forward and it just made me distressed/anxious. Yes, it is true that I often went into the nature for a walk/run because it always calmed me down but there's no way I'll do that in the winter."-S328*

The youth often mentioned how a walk, or a run outdoors helped to ease their negative moods. This participant mentions how a walk in the nature "always calmed" them down when they were depressed. They describe 'Seasonal Affective Disorder' through depression and polar nights: the darkness increases depression, while it also makes nature visits nearly impossible. is not seen inviting enough for them to go outdoors. However, they find that this is only applicable during the other seasons than winter; this links back to the representations of nature through specific seasons. In addition, they openly discuss their personal experience with depression, and how the video's representation of nature as a remedy applies to them as they often went outdoors due to the calming effect. In contrast, seeing their psychiatrist did not provide wanted results, but instead made them experience negative feelings.

> *"I have had to spend a lot of time in the nature at the family's summer cabins. It is nice to go fishing and sit by the fire when in nature. With friends I like to go out on a boat and explore at large [tutkia suuria]. At the summer cabin we always chase the beaver. There is often time to think in the nature. It is nice to drive around with an ATV on the sandy roads at the summer cabin." -S76*

Furthermore, the activities in nature were varying and the youth explained the activities they like to participate in detail. In the extract above, they described first how they had been pushed, presumably by the parents, to spend time in the nature, or in their case in summer cabins. However, despite this negatively toned obligation to spend time in nature, they then discuss in detail their favorite activities in the nature, like chasing a beaver at the summer cabin. In addition to activities like driving with an ATV, they said how nature provides "time" to think. Thus, nature acts a place for individual activities, mindful or active, in addition to social activities.

> *"Nature makes me happy. I enjoy being outdoors, camping, biking and other sporty outdoor activities. Staying at the summer cabin is the best; there we swim, grill and do other summer cabin things in the middle of the forest. We live pretty close to the city but still there are forests around every corner, which I enjoy very much on my way to school, at running tracks and other activities that I do." -S47*

Another participant also discussed activities that take place at the summer cabin, located in the "middle of the forest", but also how nature is a part of their everyday life, as they go to places or hobbies. In addition to going to places that are farther away, the joys of nature occur also through daily exposure and appreciation of nature, as it surrounds one's daily life. Similarly, things are done together with the family, but also alone.

> *" I don't know [Curse word]. Shitty video. Nature is pretty cool because you can ride your motorbike." -S198*

> *"Nature makes me happy, because it provides multiple opportunities to do things for example jogging, hiking, berry picking, mushroom picking and just spending time in nature. When the nature is clean and tidy, one can enjoy being there." -S173*

These extracts embody the variety of responses the youth wrote. As may be expected from teenage participants, the first one claims how the video is shitty, and for them nature is "pretty cool" because it provides a place for them to take their motorbike out to. In contrast, the other participant appreciates the cleanliness of nature so that they are able to join what the nature offers (berries, mushrooms) in addition to a list of activities that can take place in nature.

6.2.3 Nature as a place to experience

The youth described the nature environments in rich detail through different senses. The most used objectifications were about the sounds in nature: either complete silence, birds singing, sounds of water, or rustling of leaves in the wind.

> *"Yes because it is a peaceful place and offers an opportunity to relax. Cleanliness of nature and air, and the richness of nature have an impact on happiness. It is quiet in the nature, and nearly nothing strains the eyes there." -S153*

> *"Nature makes me happy, because in nature one does not need to think about everyday things, but one can relax and focus on the silence. It makes me happy in that moment." -S238*

One way to present nature experiences in more detail occurred through the sounds in nature. These two extracts depict the silence of nature. In the first extract, the participant discusses the quietness of nature, but also how in nature "nearly nothing strains the eyes". They too deem the cleanliness of nature as an important factor for experiencing happiness in the nature, as was discussed earlier. The other participant finds that in nature they can focus on the silence – this offers an interesting idiom, where the use of "focus", often used with sight, is used to focus on the sound of nothing. This relaxation in nature is contrasted with "everyday things", that were in earlier extracts defined as stress, busyness and being available.

> *"Nature makes me happy. I go there when school is stressful and when it feels like the world is falling apart. It makes me feel better to walk in the middle of a forest and the only sounds are birds singing and stream flowing." -S157*

In turn, some participants found the specific nature sounds soothing. When feeling stressed or metaphorically experiencing that 'world collapsing on them', the sounds of birds singing and streams flowing were found healing and calming. The metaphor explains how the participant felt that they had no control over the demands they experienced in their daily lives.

> *"I am not interested in nature - sometimes it is nice to see trees if I am feeling depressed but otherwise I am not interested." -S251*

> *"Being surrounded by nature and in its lovely greenery is nice to calm down. If you're feeling tense, the sounds of nature are nice, and it calms one's mind a lot, and relaxes many of the human's senses." -S67*

Paying attention to colors or specific things in nature through sight were common in the responses. The first participant claims that even without having an interest in nature, they still know that they can alleviate 'depressed feelings' by looking at trees. Saying "I am not interested" also depicts the reluctancy to take part in the research, or their disinterest in the topic. The second extract is more detailed: the greenery (sight) and the sounds (hearing) in nature have a calming effect according to the participant. They were the only participant to

use of "human's senses" when providing responses to the questions. However, the use of senses were indeed numerous.

> *"Nature makes me happy, because it awakens memories from childhood and joy and freshness. In the nature clean air and specific forest and nature smells make me happy, and alleviate stress for example." -S152*

In addition to the previously discussed fresh air, some participants described the smells in nature. The opportunity to go out and smell the odors of nature alleviated this participant's stress levels. In addition, they found happiness in nature because it made them think back to their childhood. This use of memories exemplifies how social representations are tied to one's history.

> *"Nature is one of the biggest factors that makes me happy. Nature gives a lot to me. A peaceful environment, jogging trails, lakes, sceneries and on top of it all, berries, yum ☺Nature is my lifeblood [elinehto]." -S269*

The youth also mentioned some tactile elements in nature, like picking berries and mushrooms. This adds up to the varying ways of youth experiencing nature and relates directly to the theme of "Nature as a place to do", as picking berries is also an activity in nature. Interestingly, this participant claims that nature for them is a "vital condition", like food or housing. Thus, nature acts as a condition for life, and this participant is unsure how they would cope without the presence of nature in their life.

7 DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that the participants understood happiness in nature holistically. Nature was objectified through common lay representations (forest, cleanliness, summer cabins), which the youth have also used in previous nature research (Korpela, 1992; Puhakka, 2014). In addition, the youth were attentive about national and current global issues, which evidently influenced how they discussed nature. Happiness in nature was experienced holistically through mind, body, and senses – nature was a place to relax, a place to be active, and a place

that one could engage in through their senses. These responses painted a detailed and sensory-rich description of the connections between nature and happiness among the youth.

The first research question focused on shared representations of nature. These representations were divided into two sub-themes: lay perceptions of nature and nature in the societal frame. As mentioned, social representations are related to certain groups they exist in, and certain representations are passed on from generation to next (Moscovici & Markova, 1998). The social representations of nature portray the cultural heritage of Finland, where nature's beauty has been appreciated since Romanticism (Simola, 2008). Forests were one of the most popular objectifications of nature, and over the years, forests have been a part of Finland's economy, politics, and culture (Roiko-Jokela, 2005). This was also evident, when participant referred to Lapland's sceneries in the wintertime, whereas they preferred southern Finland during the summer: this is often the portrayal of Finland to tourists, where Lapland is portrayed as a "winter wonderland", and summers are more focused on summer cabins, lakes, and the coast.

Indeed, traditions influence one's thinking even before we are capable to do so (Moscovici, 1984). In the responses, summer cabins were often mentioned as the place that is in nature, away from the city and provides a place to be together with the family. Overall, the nature descriptions were less focused on human-altered nature and depicted natural places, elements and physical places located in nature like summer cabins. Only one participant stated that they prefer cities over nature, but even they used natural phenomena as they described the sunset in the city.

Furthermore, the youth discussed nature within the societal structures of Finland and global issues. Social representations portray how laypeople use scientific knowledge in everyday conversations (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983): this was depicted in the responses that made connections with themes on mental health issues (medical sciences), climate change (natural sciences), and peace and equality (political sciences). For example, the statement in the video of Finns going to nature instead of therapy was said to be "misleading". These claims were

challenged by personal experiences with therapy, whereas some counterargued with high suicide and mental health issue rates in Finland.

The youth also challenged the findings of the UN research that Finland is the happiest country. In addition to portraying critical media reading skills, the youth challenged the social representation of themselves (as Finnish citizens), which the video provided to foreign audiences. Some simply claimed that the video is shitty, whereas some readily shared their own personal experiences with mental health challenges. This shows that this generation is open to discussing their own mental health issues: younger generations have had fewer stigmatizing attitudes in Finland in comparison to older generations (Wahlbeck & Aromaa, 2011). Perhaps there is a change in social representations of mental illnesses in Finland, which is valuable for future happiness research as well.

The discussion of a global issue, climate change, shows how social representations are attached to a specific social group (Burr, 1995). The concern of nature's future was a social representation in the responses. This may portray the increased awareness on people's actions on climate change, as well as Thunberg's global Fridays for future -movement's influence within this specific age group. Yle News reported on 15th of March 2019, how young people across Finland joined climate strikes (Bateman, 2019); this occurred around the same times as data collection. It is curious that the theme of nature preservation was not more prevalent. Perhaps the youth were indeed more focused on the theme of happiness and did not consider it through unhappiness or other negative emotions. It could also be that some classes, or friend groups, had recently discussed global warming, so they were more likely to make these connections in their responses. However, this is only speculative, and it is more of value for social representations to examine how these themes are discussed among laypeople.

Moreover, social representations function as a bridge between the social and psychological. Climate change is social knowledge and issue, and the youth portrayed their individual agency by discussing how something must be done. This occurrence may explicate the previously found connection between positive experiences in nature during childhood, which

can lead to a more sustainable behavior in the future (Capaldi et al., 2014; Tam, 2013). Indeed, social representations are considered necessary because they orient people towards the future (Howarth, 2006). The youth readily discussed how they are part of the change that must happen; their worries concerned their approaching adulthood and whether nature would still exist as it does now.

The responses of experiences in nature were both hedonic and eudaimonic. Doing activities in nature, were mostly for increasing pleasure and minimizing pain, as in one of the responses a participant states how in nature they can get rid of negative thoughts, and thus feel happiness. In contrast, as the quote in the title suggests, nature provided an environment where they could listen to their head: I interpret this so that it means tackling the spectrum of emotions and thoughts, from positive to negative, and being present with oneself at that moment. However, most answers were focused on experiences of hedonic happiness.

When it comes to increased well-being in nature, it seems that the youth utilized nature for well-being purposes. As the Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989) argues, time spent in nature can restore concentration due to the effortless attention. This is well described in one of the quotes that stated how nothing "strains the eyes" outdoors. According to ART, this reduces daily stress levels. Considering that the youth have been born into a technology-filled culture, natural environments may be even more valuable, as they provide a contrasting milieu to their everyday lives. As mentioned by a participant, in nature, one does not need to be "available" via smartphone, but they can just focus on being.

The youth holistically experienced happiness in nature. By this definition, I refer to the "wholeness" of experience, which here was portrayed through mind, body, and senses. Burns (2005), a clinical psychologist, discusses how health is seen as a holistic concept including physical wellness, but also emotional and spiritual well-being among shamans and traditional healers. Multisensory descriptions were prevalent, and nature provided positive changes to the mind and body. Often described as the eastern model in health, the body-mind-spirit is approached holistically, whereas in the western countries these are distinct entities and there

are different services for each need available. In contrast, the body-mind-spirit-integrated interventions showed positive results for Chinese cancer patients, bereaved wives and divorced women (Chan, Ho & Chow, 2002): the results suggest that nature also works in a holistic manner, as one method can aid in multiple ways. I interpreted the results of experiencing happiness in nature to influence the youth in a holistic manner, even though there were no spiritual references in the responses (spirit). Perhaps the utilization of nature for well-being is very closely linked with the Japanese shinrin-yoku; this practice has not been given a popularized name and developed into a similar concept in Finland – at least not yet.

Interestingly, Duncan (2014) also discusses how the claim of happiness being an individual journey/personal choice, is used by libertarians who argue against the claim that governments should support their citizens in maximizing happiness. It seems that the youth discussed this notion from an opposing view – the government and the societal context of Finland were seen as enablers of one's happiness, which shows more social democratic, or liberal values. Indeed, in these responses, happiness was linked with the welfare system, where citizens have rights for social security. In contrast, the youth did not discuss materialistic, or consumerist, pursuits in their responses: nature and happiness were about experiences, natural elements and places. This portrays critical consideration of happiness; in the video, one can gain or understand happiness once they travel to Finland and learn 'the secret to happiness' from the 'happiest people in the world'.

Overall, happiness was understood through various accounts. This challenges the simplicity of questionnaires, which may ask only one question on happiness (UN report). In this research, the youth were allowed to write their own accounts of happiness and nature instead. This made it possible for the interviewee's own cognitive patterns to present themselves with as little influence by the researcher as possible (Apo, 1995). The written responses to a paper also allowed participants to use different ways to provide their answers; some drew images, some wrote essay-type answers whereas some preferred using lists. In future research, these

different methods to provide answers should be considered and perhaps supported, in order to gain a wholesome understanding of happiness.

In contrast, multisensory experiences in nature environments have been a topic in educational research (Chawla, 1999; Chawla, 2002; Cobb, 1993) and geriatrics (Orr, Wagstaffe, Briscoe & Garside, 2016). Orr et al. (2016) examined the sensory experiences in nature among older people through a systematic review of qualitative research, which allows exploring the holistic experience of nature. Similarly, to the current study's results, they found that older people paid attention to nature through their senses: viewing, being and doing nature. A review by Franco, Shanahan & Fuller (2017) examine how the nature is beneficial through sight, sound, smell, taste and touch; sight has gained the most interest according to the researchers, and studies focusing more on the variety of senses and their functions are needed. Thus, providing opportunities and understanding how youth experience nature, the positive mental health of the elderly could be improved.

Even though the multisensory experiences in nature have been researched, it is a new research avenue for social representations. Instead of using only images, objectifications and anchoring, the social representations were discussed through sensory rich descriptions. The representations among the youth included visual, auditory and tactile sensory experiences, which also functioned as objectifications that were easy to locate. Instead, previous research has examined social representations of climate change in media through emotions, such as anger, pity or compassion (Höijer, 2011), visualizations of good leaders in terms of communicativeness, care and support (Martikainen, 2018), and the interpersonal emotions of failure and shame attached to the absence of female orgasms among females (Lavie-Ajayi & Joffe, 2009). However, it seems that there is a lack of considering social representations through holistic sensory experiences.

Indeed, among the responses clean nature as such provides a multisensory experience. Being outdoors in 'fresh air' is a common benefit found in aging research (Day, 2008; Butler & Cohen, 2010), as recognized by Orr et al. (2016). Fresh air acts as a multi-sensory sensation,

as it awakens the tactile feelings of wind, and sounds, even smells are attached to it (Orr et al., 2016). Clean nature was one of the most common representation among the youth's responses. However, previous wellbeing research found that a third of people under 26 years of age, who live alone in Helsinki, were not satisfied with their living environment's cleanliness (Borg, 2015). Considering the occurrence of this theme in the responses, preserving this cleanliness and fresh air should be a priority in cities.

As evaluated in the results section, the representation of clean nature, may well be a continuation to the representation of nature as a part of a welfare society. The caring and support of individuals by the Finnish society extends to nature too. This is exemplified by the legal concept of "Everyman's Right", which allows everyone to enjoy nature anywhere in the Finnish countryside. Interestingly, clean nature or fresh air, is not directly mentioned in the video, yet many of the responses emphasized the influence of clean nature on their "mood" and happiness. In addition to portraying the importance of preserving Finnish nature, this exemplifies how the youth drew examples to their responses beyond the video's representations.

The study used a video stimulus before collecting responses from the participants. According to Törrönen (2017), a stimulus is a larger concept than a question or statement, and it can be used as a part of a research or the basis for research; the stimulus must relate to the research and theories. Videos are a common way to pass information among the younger generation, who have grown up in the era of technological advancements. Thus, it was of interest to see how the youth would react to the video with its provocative statements. However, previous research has found that viewing technologically mediated nature is also connected to increased one's wellbeing (Velarde, Fry & Tveit, 2007). It could be that due to the combination of visual and audio information, the youth's well-being increased by this short video, and they were more compelled to write their responses with such sensory richness.

In part, the results of the current research replicated previous findings, showing that natural environments can provide a place for positive invigorating experiences (Aura, Horelli &

Korpela, 1997). The findings from Korpela's (1992) research focusing on favorite places found that youth went outdoors to nature to ease unpleasant feelings and increase the pleasant feelings. From all students, 15% said their favorite was in nature: the woods, lakeshore, or summer cottage (Korpela, 1992). Puhakka (2014) also found that youth mostly used nouns like the forest, trees, plants, and water areas to describe nature; also, calm, silent, and green were commonly used adjectives. Summer cabins were also used by the youth as portals to nature. These results were very much replicated in the current study, suggesting that the youth still favor going outdoors. Moreover, the replication of similar results throughout the years may suggest that the representations have remained largely similar.

Even though being in nature increased positive feelings, it is also worth mentioning the presence of stress in the responses. As the benefits of nature on well-being are well-known, nature could also offer a low-cost and easily accessible intervention for the youth. These participants are about to leave secondary school and enter high schools and vocational schools: their independence increases, and adulthood nears, which partly explains the increased experiences of stress, busyness, and depression. Indeed, adolescence is a stage of transitioning from childhood to adulthood (Turunen, 2005). This transitionary period was well exemplified by how only one participant mentions "playing" outdoors; a word normally used for children's play and games, suggesting that most of these 15-16-year-olds no longer "play" or alternatively, it is not something they want to or should mention at their age, but rather they discuss the societal issues, their mental health, and concerns of future.

Many of the participants went out to nature to be alone with their thoughts. They discussed how there was no need to be perfect in nature, one can "just be" without any judgment. This suggests that there are certain demands in other environments. Korpela (1992) discussed that leisure time allowed the participants to escape the demands of parents, school, and individual aspirations. Two-thirds of Finns go to nature for walks, which were found to be pleasurable, aesthetically pleasing, improving health, and additionally, they helped to take distance from everyday lives (Paronen, 2001). Going to nature alone, may be a social representation of experiencing nature among all age groups. Hart (1979) also found that 4-11-year-olds went

to nature to find quiet places to be alone; also 14-18-year-olds have sought out for these solitary places in previous research (Sommer, 1990; Owens, 1988). Taking time to be alone in nature may thus enhance these positive feelings in nature, resulting in rich sensory experiences and happiness.

Nature still plays an important role in the youths' lives, as the responses included vivid and versatile experiences in nature. However, it is important to note the influence of the surrounding milieu that Lahti provides for the participants. Living in an average sized Finnish city that has easy access to nature, so that one can get away from the city, and be alone influences the responses in this research. The responses could have been very different if the participants had lived in the capital area in the south or Utsjoki in northern Lapland – perhaps this is an avenue for future research to explore the differences between youth living in different Finnish cities. In addition, it should be noted that the data were collected during late spring, which may have elicited certain types of responses, as summer and summer holidays were approaching, and winter had been left behind.

There have been discussions regarding human disconnection from nature at early age, defined as 'extinction of experience' due to technology, written-word emphasis, and indoor educational settings (Beery & Jorgensen, 2018). In her paper over 20 years ago, Pantzar (1998) wondered whether the half-million existing summer cabins in Finland disappear in the future, and if the sounds of nature will be too quiet to be heard, and if the nature sceneries still exist but without any glamour and sparks attached to it. The responses depicted sounds of nature in such detail that it seems like Pantzar's concerns have not become reality. Instead, the youth fondly talked about their summer cabins, their outings to nature and described the sounds and silence of nature in their responses. In addition to the chosen advertisement, it seems that especially now after Covid-19, there is a certain newly found glamour attached to nature, as discussed in the introduction.

Evaluation of research

The results focused on social representations of happiness and nature among a group of Finnish youth. While the results cannot be widely generalized, they offer an insight into the representations and thoughts of this particular group. The results showed some overlap with previous research, which had focused on other aspects of nature research. The interest in this topic arises from my interests, which have certainly shaped how the study was carried out, analyzed, and what was found meaningful to discuss in this thesis. Galletta (2013) has argued that with enough reflexivity, one's relationship to the topic may have "the potential to contribute greatly to the research." (Galletta, 2013, p. 12). I have aimed to describe each step of the research in a detailed manner for the transparency of my thought processes. Interpretations have been based on the participants' responses and combining them into groups provided a look into the social representations of nature and happiness.

The data collection was carried out in Finnish, and I have translated the extracts from Finnish to English. This translation process from English to non-English already involves a level of interpretation and there may be loss of meaning, and loss of validity in qualitative research (van Nes, Abma, Jonsson & Deeg, 2010). I kept the original Finnish extracts in the analysis phase for as long as possible before translating them to English. In future research, gender differences in experiences of happiness in nature may be of interest. In the light of the paper by Cameron and Stinson (2019), I would suggest that future research should instead of "othering" (i.e. giving an "other" option for gender), allow the participants to self-define their gender instead when possible.

School as a research setting is not neutral due to power relations and structures (Strandell, 2010), as mentioned by Puhakka (2014). The participants may have felt that they need to perform and provide more school-oriented responses, even though their personal accounts were of interest. This was perhaps also enhanced by the power structure because adult researchers gathered data from underage participants. The variety of responses, including some that remained very simplistic, seemed ironic or were copies from friends, portray that not all participants felt that they should provide "wanted" answers; instead, some even challenged why this research was conducted, similarly to previous research (Wiens et al.,

2016). However, Weiss (1994) has argued that interviewing people in their natural settings in qualitative social science research design is a key factor. Instead of collecting data indoors, future social research on nature-connectedness could be placed into natural environments, such as walking interventions in natural environments (Lumber, Richardson & Sheffield, 2017).

Much of qualitative research data is collected via interviews, or natural discussions that occur online. In my research, the responses were written accounts. In order to best examine social representations from hundreds of participants, gathering written responses was a practical way to gain as many accounts as possible. This was also time-efficient for the data collection and transcribing process. Unlike interviews, paper formats provided a non-interruptive data collection method, in contrast to interviews, giving the youth freedom to write, draw, or list their thoughts in as much detail as they wished. In contrast, interviews would have provided more detailed accounts, but gathering data from such a scope of participants would not have been feasible.

Even though written in 1946, Tove Jansson's words from *Comet in Moominland*, as quoted at the very beginning of this thesis, still rings true today. Perhaps, if everyone took the time to consider their affection and need for nature in their lives, they too would feel "very, very sad" if they had to live without the presence of the sea, forests, and sunshine. Like Moomins, the youth also found happiness in nature, and within the experiences, they were able to describe through the sensory richness nature provides. The aim of this research was to better understand the everyday lives of Finnish youth, as was stated in the encompassing LUODE project. I hope that these versatile and sensory-rich descriptions by the youth are taken into consideration in the planning of health interventions, activities, and cities. After all, nature may offer a simple solution for healthier individuals and a healthier planet.

Ethical issues

As mentioned, the LUODE project had obtained the necessary research permits beforehand. These were of importance due to the participants being less than 18 years of age, even when

the topics of this research were not highly sensitive. The format of data collection also allowed full anonymity for the participants to answer whatever they wished. Full anonymization of responses took place during the transcription process; if any participant names occurred, they were deleted. The responses were gathered from many different schools in Lahti, which makes personal identification of any participant difficult. For this reason, the names of some local nature places were not deleted – they were also of interest for the analysis. Some participants did mention personal experiences with mental health issues. As happiness may be considered through its opposite of unhappiness, the research may have brought up negative thoughts for some participants. In hindsight, perhaps a school psychologist's contact details could have been provided.

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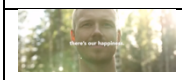
APPENDIX

Screenshots	Time	Moving image (Summer only)	Text	Music/Sound
	00:00-00:05	Pines and birches swaying lightly in the wind, sun is shining through the woods	Between the pines and birches	Birds chirping, leaves rustling in the wind,
	00:06-00:08	Close-up of a smiling man's face, with the forest and sun on the background	There's our happiness	Same as above
	00:09-00:11	Archipelago, with a windmill, red huts and boats on the shore.	When others go to therapy	Sound of soft waves splashing, soft music on the background starts
	00:12-00:14	Older man rowing a wooden boat by the shore; wooden buildings on the shore at the background	We Finns head outdoors.	Same as above
	00:15-00:18	Picture focuses on the same man's close-up, who does not smile, but looks peaceful.	That makes us the happiest people in the world.	Same as above
	00:19-00:21	Archipelago, with a sailing boat in the middle of the shot.	Now it's time everyone had a chance	Same, added seagulls cawing
	00:21-00:23	Close-up of a short-haired blond woman, with sky on the background. No big smile.	To learn from the best.	Same as above
	00:23-00:27	City in the evening, with streetlights on, people dining outdoors,	We, ordinary Finns, welcome visitors	Music same as before, but now people speaking in the distance
	00:28-00:30	Dark-featured Asian woman smiling slightly with blurred city lights on the background	To learn how to reconnect with nature	Same as above
	00:31	Low angle shot of birches and pines in the forest		Same music, birds chirping and trees

				swaying in the wind
	00:32-00:34	Same as above	RENT A Finn FIND YOUR CALM (different font)	Same as above
	00:35	Same as above		Same as above, music fades away
	00:36-00:40	Woman smiling, laying on the ground on a pink blanket, looking up and around, happy	VisitFinland.com and the logo	Birds chirping and trees swaying in the wind